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MARCELLE

An Historical Novel

Hampden Burnham

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Prize in Canadian History

Presented by

Mabel Roberts in Watt Mss

to

Alfred Nelson King.

September 1905

MARCELLE

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL

By

HAMPDEN BURNHAM

Author of "Canadians in the Imperial Service," "Jack Ralston," etc.

"New France battled against a fate which her own organic fault made inevitable. Her history is a great and significant drama enacted among untamed forests, with a distant gleam of courtly splendours and the regal pomp of Versailles."—
"Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV."
—Parkman.

TORONTO
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1905

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TO

M. Benjamin Sulte, C. M. G.

President of the Royal Society of Canada

IN GRATEFUL

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS MANY

ACTS OF KINDNESS.

INTRODUCTION.

AT the time of the discovery of America, Spain, England and France were the chief nations of the earth. Each, looking with covetous eye upon the alluring prospect of the New World, hastened to prepare for its conquest and for the inevitable conflict of rival interests. The recent rapid development of the science of navigation and of the spirit of discovery had kindled into surprising fervor the general passion for adventure. The success of Columbus had roused to the highest pitch the lust of conquest and foreign enterprise. All Europe was aflame. The New World was looked upon not only as a treasure-house in itself, but through it also was thought to lie the shortest route to the fabled Indies, where wealth unbounded awaited those who first should dare the perils of the unknown seas.

How little can we know what it then was to dream of "the peerless Orient." Europe was poor—and poverty intensifies cupidity. The old order of things was passing away; the new was hastening to take its place.

In the desire for adventure was embodied not only the lust of gold and of conquest, but the passionate zeal of the Church as well. With the soldier went

the priest—the one to uproot, the other to plant; the one to take away, the other to give that which could never be taken away. Strange companions, truly. And the history of this companionship was not less strange. War for a world was about to break forth, and whatever military power, commercial power and the power of the Church could do was done for better and for worse in the strenuous enterprise.

The Old World rivalry of England, France and Spain speedily became as fierce, if not fiercer, in the New World. It is not our purpose to follow the fortunes of the invaders in South America, or even in the whole of North America, but to confine our attention to the northern portion of the latter, now known as the Dominion of Canada, from which Spain had withdrawn in order to go southward, leaving this portion of the field to her two great rivals.

The heart of this northern wilderness was reached by two routes, the one through Hudson Bay, the other through the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Intersecting the country in every part are innumerable streams, some mere brooks hardly navigable for the birch-bark canoe, others mighty enough to float the largest of modern steamships.

The earliest strife began in the region tributary to Hudson Bay. In all this vast territory was to be found valuable fur, and in the fur trade with the Indians the first white men discovered a mine of wealth—a discovery, however, which not all their cupidity and desire for secrecy could keep from becoming known.

Then, too, we have for further consideration the aboriginal inhabitants, the development of trade, the efforts of the missionaries, and all that mighty throbbing of energy and change following in the wake of discovery, adventure, commercial enterprise and religious zeal.

The question of trade the English and the French proposed to solve in different ways. The former looked with greater favor upon absolute monopoly as more likely to conduce to order and success; the latter upon the variety and number of the contestants for the prize. The "One Hundred Associates" of Cardinal Richelieu, the "Compagnie du Nord" and the "Compagnie de Quebec" were the chief of all companies under charter from the French King, whilst the most famous of the English companies was "The Honorable Company of Merchant-adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay." To these must be added, as bearing strongly upon the main history of war and commerce, the immense number of individual traders whose desire for profit caused them to flock into the forbidden region of monopoly, there to ply in every imaginable way an illegitimate trade, with all its attendant and fearful evils.

In referring to the importance of these new developments of trade, a word or two regarding the personnel and purposes of the companies will not be out of place. The list of charter members of the Hudson's Bay Company comprised some of the chief men of the realm, the first governor being Prince Rupert, Master-of-the-Horse; the second, James, Duke of York, after-

wards King of England and the third the renowned Duke of Marlborough.

With such a variety of important and conflicting interests there was naturally almost continual misunderstanding between England and France, although from the first efforts were made by the ruling powers of each to avoid the impending struggle.

We take the following extract from the "Instructions of Charles I., of England, to his Ambassador in France," from Mr. Beckles Willson's work, "The Great Company."

"Lord Preston, who in the year 1684 held the post of Ambassador Extraordinary of King Charles II. at the Court of Versailles, was advised of the return to Paris of the bushranger Radisson in these terms: 'My Lord—It has just reached our ears and that of His Royal Highness, the Duke of York, Governor of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, that the person who has caused all the recent trouble in Hudson's Bay regions, whereby our merchants have suffered so much at the hands of the French, is at this moment in Paris. As it is as much in the interests of the nation as of the Company that there should be no repetition of these encroachments and disturbances . . .'"

"Upon the same subject the King of France wrote as follows to the French Governor of La Nouvelle France: 'I recommend you to prevent the English as much as possible from establishing themselves in Hudson's Bay, possession whereof was taken in my name several years ago. . . .'"

To the rivalry born of discovery in the first instance

was added the rivalry of commerce, and from these differences of interest, always augmented and intensified by wars at home, arose the conflict of arms between France and England in America which culminated in the fall of Quebec.

Now let us turn our attention for a moment to a consideration of the Indians, with whom an alliance was sought by both French and English, and whose trade was the immediate object of their desire.

Fenimore Cooper has been accused of having depicted the Red Indian of North America as a more striking and noble personality than there is any warrant for. In our opinion such an accusation is itself unwarranted, since a proper knowledge of the Indian as he once was not only dispels such an idea, but demonstrates conclusively that the great novelist wrote quite within the limits of Indian life and character. It must always be remembered that the Indian was not of a derivative race, but of a primary, coëval with the ancestors of the ancient Greek, Celt and Teuton.

From what we know of the red man from a variety of sources—sources at once authentic and comprehensive—we believe that his history is the equal in attractiveness of the history of the ancient Celt and Teuton, or indeed of the chivalric races of the Middle Ages on the continent of Europe. This, we are well aware, is a claim of considerable magnitude, but it is one which will be found to sustain itself upon historical examination if the examiner approach the subject with a mind not only free from prejudice but sensitive

to the vibrations of the sentiment of poetry and romance. That he was of a race inherently inferior to the white we decline to admit. Rather was he of a race that may be compared to the white in exactly the same way that night may be compared to day—less glaring, less clamorous, less vulgar, but not less splendid or less beautiful, and, in addition, possessing those very qualities of mystery which we are accustomed to attach to earth and "all that it inhabits" when the orb of day has disappeared from view.

Of the mechanical arts the Indian knew practically nothing, and if also we should say that in language, institutions and laws he surely could not be compared so ambitiously, we should, however, find that the comparison still holds, and that nowhere in the world or in the history of man was the theory of human liberty, founded upon the principle of pure individualism, ever so simply and so perfectly worked out. Not Herbert Spencer himself could have wished for a more perfect specimen of his man of freedom, where *laissez-faire* and *laissez-aller* were represented by theoretically unrestrained freedom acting in a practically limitless field. The dignity of the Indian, and all that it comprehends, was the Indian's first and last glory and consideration. An alert mind, a vivid imagination, a spirit of natural refinement (even in cruelty), a faultless physique, all grafted upon a temperament essentially romantic, produced a figure unique in human history.

His laws, though unwritten, were not less immutable than those of the Medes and Persians, but they

were of what we may call a moral rather than a legal character. His religion was all that fancy could paint in the hours of waking and all that dreams could suggest in the hours of sleep. His manners were the offspring of a proud sincerity, tempered by the gentler qualities of extreme hospitality and boundless generosity. Beggars were unknown amongst the Indian races, for they accounted it not less disgraceful than inhuman that food and raiment should be lacking for one when it existed in abundance for others. The vulgar greed of ordinary commerce was wholly unknown to them as well, and when the Indians saw the trade artifices of the white man reducing him, as they said, to the level of a wolverine, they laughed and shrugged their shoulders in scorn. In the fine arts, of course, they were not abreast of the Eastern nations, either in range or in degree, but the taste displayed by them in their personal ornamentation was both artistic and original, for good taste no less than grace of bodily action was a quality that belonged by natural birthright to the Indian race.

In point of speech and of their spoken tongues there has been nothing more soft and beautiful in the history of language, and their songs possessed all the sweetness of the finest and most melodious specimens of our modern vocal music. To nature they went for inspiration—since, indeed, they lived in the very bosom of nature—and their accents, like their metaphors, were those of the wind in the forest, the birds of the air, the animals of the chase, and the sounds of waters.

What, then, of the Indian women? They were the toilers and doers of the commonplace. They would not suffer their husbands or brothers to devote their time to other than the glory of war or the excitement of the chase. On this basis they were treated kindly and throughout their married lives found compensation for their drudgery in the recollection of the happy period of their wooing. As maidens they were alluring and often beautiful, as witness the number who won the love and enduring affection of white men of position. In the heyday and happiness of their youth the Indian paid them the utmost deference and attention, nor was there less of the poetic and the beautiful in his love-making because he was an Indian—rather indeed, the more.

But war was at once his business and his joy. Cunning, artful and courageous, he was a dreaded and a cruel foe. Grateful for favors, which he never forgot to repay, his memory served him not less faithfully when there were insults and injuries to requite. Too scornful to be mean, he was disdainful even of death and showed his contempt of it by going to it unmoved through tortures that are too painful to recite. But nothing, even in the fury of battle, could make him forget his code of honor, and if the punctilious in points such as these are not less so in particulars less worthy we must overlook the failings of the less in the virtues of the greater.

The polished arms and gleaming armor of the European made him, perhaps, a less vulnerable foe in

open battle, but even these could not make him a nobler specimen of manhood than the Indian, nor an enemy more to be dreaded in the final outcome of a quarrel. While, too, with the European a faculty for combined movement originated a duty of fealty and strict obedience, the Indian kept himself always free to live and fight as he might choose. Nor was this independence of spirit a source of wrangling and vulgar dispute, since the spirit of individualism was not accidental but natural; and whilst it ultimately made the red a victim to the white race, it demonstrates the proud superiority of the Indian character. The excess of European chivalry was not less fantastic than grotesque, but the extreme of Indian chivalry was never such as to rouse us to laughter or contempt. If we compare the Don Quixotes of the period of the decline of chivalry with King Philip, Tecumseh or Thayendanega, representatives of the closing years of Indian racial existence and domination, we shall see how the one becomes ridiculous because it was not natural, while the other moves us to sadness because of its end.

If, too, repose is the flower of greatness, then must it also be added to the general picturesqueness of the Indian character, for surely no people have possessed it in greater perfection.

With regard to vices, of which both races had their share, it is but simple truth to say that the Indian race was the much less vicious of the two. In the Indian age theft was unknown amongst red

men, and they had never heard of an intoxicant or of an oath till the firewater of the white men came to drive them to ruin, body and soul.

Of that noble race of red-hued men (scientifically, perhaps, the yellow-hued, since it was of ancient Turanian origin and sprung from the original home of man in the north-east of Eurasia) there remains at the present day scarcely a vestige. Here and there in the wilderness one may still run across a tall, erect and striking figure combining activity with strength, the solitary remnant of a people that, like the primeval forest, has vanished and "leaves scarce a trace behind." Nomad races the Indians were, and as nomad races they must be considered lacking all that organization, a knowledge of commerce, an acquaintance with the mechanical and fine arts, and the possession of a literature can furnish, but imbued with the epic qualities of an heroic people well worthy of our study and admiration, and differing but in degree from the most cultured races of ancient or modern times.

Scientists agree that the Red Indian through his ancestors dates back to the Paleolithic Age, the Mongol ancestral race in each hemisphere developing differently. In North America the Mound-builders were the certain forefathers of the Red Indian.

It is interesting to compare the careers of the original emigrants from their Euro-Asiatic home, as developed in Europe, Asia and Africa, with those of their brothers in America.

The English and the French, then—sometimes with and sometimes against the Indians—pursued their way

of conquest and of commerce. The missionary on the one hand, and the trader on the other, furnish the good and evil geniuses of the long and interesting story from the first discovery to the time of the opening of our tale. The seeds of rivalry and discord had grown into a harvest of large proportions. The harvest was gathered fifty years afterwards at the capture of Quebec.

In a few minor instances, as in the case of Madame de Frontenac, we have ventured to depart from the records of history, but in general we shall be found to have adhered to them.

MARCELLE

CHAPTER I.

HARD by the trail that from the City of Quebec continued deviously by land and water for a thousand leagues to the Upper Lakes and the regions beyond, and two hundred leagues from the beginning of this great highway, dwelt Black John, an old coureur-de-bois. The gain of the great companies under French charters in traffic with the Indians had long been so great that it had tempted many of the French-Canadians to engage in illicit trade, and it was said, too, that some of those high in the authority of the French King were not above violating the ordinances of monopoly which they had sworn to protect. For a few drams of brandy the red man sold the finest fox and beaver skins, and so extensive had the leak become that the outlaws of the forest were under constant condemnation of death by royal decree.

What cared they for death, however, in a country where death lurked behind every bush, or for the law where the vast extent of land and water rendered defiance of its provisions easy. It was in vain, too,

that laws were passed prohibiting settlers on the St. Lawrence from being absent from their dwellings for more than a day and a night, or that the area of their wanderings for fish and game was circumscribed within the smallest compass. Soldiers of France and habitants alike defied the authorities and their threats. The laws continued to be of little avail except to make trade illicit.

Black John was a coureur-de-bois. He knew the forest and the river from where the Montagnais wandered in the east to the land of the Ottawas in the far west. But at the time of which we speak he was settled in a cabin in the Huron country, where he had lived for more than twenty years, near the main trail where it meets the waters of the lake of the Hurons, but far enough from it to be secure from the prying eye of informers and the King's men. The cabin was built of the trunks of trees laid crosswise at the ends. The roof was of thatch that hung heavily over the ends and sides and in winter held the snow like a blanket, to keep the cabin warm. The windows were few and unprotected beyond light wooden shutters, and the door, for there was but one, was heavy enough to withstand a rush by a drunken Indian, but no more. Black John knew the people with whom he had to deal, and was well aware that whilst palisades would serve to awaken suspicion they would form no real protection, which was rather to be sought for in the desire of the red man for his "trade" and firewater than in arms and a stout resistance. But what the cabin lacked in strength it made up in com-

fort and in the beauty of its surroundings. Tall trees, which shaded deeply the ground beneath in summer, rose on every hand, while close by the waters of a spring bubbled up out of the ground and found their way at last into the great lake beyond. From the top of the ridge behind the cabin the lake of the Hurons was plainly visible through an avenue for the eye cut by Black John in his younger days when he lived alone. But Black John had long since ceased to live alone. He had married a woman of the Hurons, who died not long after, bequeathing to him an only child, Marcelle, who had at the time of the opening of our history but recently grown to womanhood. Above the medium height and of a finely-formed and well-rounded figure, Marcelle was chiefly distinguished, however, for her exquisite eyes—large, dark and lustrous—and for the purity of her olive-tinted complexion. From her mother she had inherited a litheness and grace of movement that had early earned her the name of "The Fawn" in Indian parlance. Her attractiveness of person and charm of manner had made her widely celebrated as "the beauty of the wilderness," but she remained indisposed to accept the attentions of any of her numerous admirers, and continued to enjoy the freedom of her existence and to be the despair alike of soldiers, traders, gentlemen, scouts, coureurs and the red chiefs of her mother's race.

At times the cabin took on the character of an inn. It was an inn in the sense that travellers might put up there if Black John invited them to do so, but it

was not a public house in the sense that it was open to the clamor and riotous misconduct of wayfaring rascals and freebooters. Black John had a good idea of his own dignity and of the respect due to Marcelle, although physically he was not such an one as most men would be afraid of.

The French and the English had been fighting for more than half a century for control of the continent, and the scattered inhabitants of the immense region in dispute were always at daggers drawn according to their nationality. The Indians played one against the other with considerable astuteness, although there were many cases of sincere friendship and attachment on their part for either side.

"I don't know, Marcelle, but I will give up this job for your sake," said the old coureur, as he sat by his huge fireplace, the glancing light gleaming here and there about the room as it fell upon a polished axe-head, gun-barrel, trap, or dagger, for the beams and walls were hung with a large variety of weapons and hunting implements. Marcelle stopped in her work of making a hunting-cap.

"Mon dieu! Why would you give up for my sake?" she exclaimed, in astonishment, for she had never complained of the life they led.

"Ah, my child, you see the people that come this way—bad, bad! I cannot take care of you like I used," replied her father, dejectedly.

"What does that matter? I am not afraid," she said.

"No, you may not be afraid," mused her father,

reflectively, "but the Huron was here lately, and he says that the English get the stronger and that the Company will send men through here before long."

"What does he know about it?" she cried, reassuringly.

"Ah! The chief was at Ville Marie, and he has a sad heart for a young brave. He feels bad. The French always treat the Indian well, but the English are rude, and want everything for themselves."

"Well! what does he say they are going to do? They are not going to eat us, I suppose."

"You do not know the English," said her father, reprovingly. "They would ill-treat you if they dared," and the old man's eyes flashed wickedly.

"I can go away."

"Chut!" said Black John, warningly, as his ear caught a sound. There was a step at the door, a low knock, and the Huron entered.

"Ha! Huron, welcome!" cried the free-trader, excitedly. "I have just spoken of you. Take a seat."

The striking figure of the Indian chief drew itself up to its full height and his bright eyes glistened with pleasure as Marcelle came forward and extended her hand to him, smiling.

"I am glad you have come, Huron," she said. "Papa is gloomy. He says you told him of the English robbers. I say you will take care of me, if need be. Won't you?"

"The Huron's eyes always look for the Fawn. He will be like the eagle for her sake," said the Huron, earnestly.

"There!" exclaimed Marcelle, triumphantly, a blush of pleasure overspreading her sweet face. "What have I told you, papa? The Blessed Virgin will protect me always. Men forget that. They think to protect themselves. Eh, Huron?"

"The wind will tell if the wolf comes, and the Huron is swift."

"Vraiement! The Huron is swift and strong. The English will do nothing," laughed Marcelle, gaily. "Will you eat?"

"I come from the mountain since the sun rose," said the Huron.

"What! More than twenty leagues? Have you had nothing?" she exclaimed.

"No! Not hungry," answered the Huron, placidly.

"Nonsense!" cried Black John. "That is always the way with you Hurons. You are never hungry, never thirsty, never tired. You are too proud. The saucepan, Marcelle. A good friend and a good supper go well together."

"Take the deer's horn or the willow-reed and smoke," said Black John, pointing to the mantelpiece.

The Huron obeyed, and the two men sat before the fire while the ragout steamed and Marcelle busied herself about the house. Presently she brought in more candles, but the blaze of the fire made them look dull.

"I don't know what to think of it at all," said the free-trader, musingly. "If the English get the better they will drive us out unless I can pay them for a privilege. But they hate us, and you, too, Huron."

"Yes," said the Indian, softly. "They drive everything away."

"Why not stop them? Sacré!" cried the trader, with energy. "You could do it. Get the Hurons, and the Ottawas, and the Sioux, and they will be glad to go south and leave us. Curse the Iroquois!"

"The war-path?" said the Huron, suggestively.

"Certainement! Mon dieu! The war-path. You become a great warrior, the king of warriors, and save the country. The scalps! Think of them."

The Huron's eyes flashed at the thought of the glory to be won.

"I will get the Turtles," said he.

"No! Not Tuscaloosa. You ought to know him; he would sell and betray us all. He is jealous of you already," and Black John seized a brand, lighted his pipe, and threw it back into the fire.

The snowstorm of the preceding two days had ended, as usual, in a gale, and the snow blew across the open space of the forest in sheets. Down the side trail, which near Black John's opened for an arpent or two, it swirled like a winding sheet.

"A bitter night," thought Marcelle, as she peeped out, for she liked to look at the fierceness of a winter storm from the security of the cabin.

"Mon père!" she exclaimed, suddenly.

"What, Marcelle?"

"There is someone down the trail—or a bear."

"Come!" said Black John to the Huron, and they went to the door. Both looked narrowly into the night.

"Man!" said the Huron, quietly.

"Oh! help him, Huron," cried Marcelle, in agitation. "Where is Jean that he does not bark?" She whistled, but the dog did not come.

Already the Huron had started down the trail, and his long stride soon carried him to the spot. Presently he returned, bearing something on his back.

"It is a man; I can see him," said Marcelle, as she clasped her father's arm tightly.

"What is it, Huron?" called Black John.

"A Frenchman," said the Huron.

"A spy!" cried the trader, fiercely, stamping his foot; "let him die."

"Oh, no, papa. Take care of him!" exclaimed Marcelle, in alarm. "Is he dead, Huron?"

"No," said the Huron, as he brought the human bundle in and deposited it on the floor.

Marcelle took a candle and knelt down by the stranger's side.

"He breathes; he is very cold. Rub his hands, Huron. I will get him a hot drink." Marcelle ran to the saucepan and poured out a little of the ragout.

She took off the stranger's cap and smoothed back his tangled hair. "He is handsome," she murmured, admiringly, as she raised his head and put a spoonful of the warm broth into his mouth.

"Let the dog die!" said Black John again; but Marcelle merely shrugged her shoulders and told the Huron to move him nearer the fire.

Presently a long sigh escaped the stranger, and he opened his eyes wide.

"Thank you," said he, at last, in a husky voice.

"Ah, dieu merci! he speaks," cried Marcelle, delightedly; but her father was in no humor to be sympathetic. The Huron looked on, but was silent.

The Frenchman struggled up to his feet and steadied himself.

"You are very good," said he.

"No; it is the Blessed Virgin," said Marcelle. "Sit there. How did you get so cold, monsieur?"

"I lost everything this morning when the storm arose," said he. "I come from Quebec. I am bound for Hudson Bay. It is a very long journey."

"Yes, and full of dangers," added Marcelle.

"I am travelling——"

"A spy!" shrieked Black John, springing up and drawing his hunting knife, unable longer to contain himself.

"Papa!" exclaimed Marcelle, reproachfully. "You must not touch him."

"I will!" cried Black John, fiercely, as he pushed back his sleeve.

"Huron!" shrieked Marcelle, in terror, "stand between; Huron, if you love me, stand between."

With a bound the Huron was by her side and shielding the stranger.

"What? Huron! You a spy, too? You are all spies," cried Black John, bitterly, and the free-trader sat down unwillingly, black with disappointment and rage.

"He is not a spy," said Marcelle, after a pause.

"He is," cried Black John, passionately.

"You are not a spy, are you, monsieur? You will not tell what you have seen?"

"Upon my honor as a gentleman," said the stranger, solemnly, "I am no spy, but one of the King's men — nor a traitor to hospitality."

"There, now, papa! What did I say?" exclaimed Marcelle, triumphantly.

"Yes," replied her father, reluctantly, "but what brings him here?"

"To see what the Jesuits do and to take note of the fur-trade," said the stranger, boldly.

Black John was dumb with surprise, but he hated the priests, and, indeed, all who were for law and order.

"You hate the priests?" he asked, when he had recovered from his astonishment.

"Yes."

"Good! But then you swear not to reveal what you have seen?"

"Yes," said the Frenchman; "but I have seen nothing. What have I seen?"

"True; it is so," said the free-trader, with satisfaction, as he reflected; "but Marcelle is too fond of strangers always."

"Tell me of your life, monsieur," said Marcelle, "of all the fine ladies and handsome men. It is so interesting."

The Frenchman lighted his half-smoked pipe and slowly recited the incidents of his career.

"But why did you say that you had come to hate the priests? The Church is holy. You are wrong," she continued.

"I am for His Excellency and I have no love for priests," said he, respectfully.

"Ah! that is too bad. What would we women do

but for the priests and the Blessed Virgin? We should be wild and bad like the men. No; it would not do. Hark! there is Jean. Huron, please let him in."

A huge mastiff bounded through the opened door and rushed to his mistress's side. For a moment he eyed the stranger questioningly, but at Marcelle's command, with a low growl and a whine, subsided at her feet.

"It is well he is not like papa. Jean is not suspicious of you," said Marcelle, laughing.

"I do not see why your father should be suspicious of me. I do not wish to prevent his trading."

"Did you come for a company?" asked Black John, significantly.

"Not for one with a charter," replied the stranger, smiling.

"How, then, are you for the King?"

"Ah! that is between His Excellency and Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. They quarrel continually. His Excellency has more than once said that it is the priests who make all the trouble with the Indians. They obey the Bishop and not the laws," said the stranger.

"Who, then, are you?" bluntly asked Black John, tired of fencing and beginning to be interested.

"My name is François Latour, and I am for the King and His Excellency the Count de Frontenac his representative. Since we think alike in business and in religion, you and I, we should be friends, eh?"

"Truly. But where is your party?" said Black John.

"Lost in the snow," said Latour, laughing. "They are lost, for I am sure it is not I. But I shall find them in the morning."

"What will you do when you find them?"

"I will give a good report of the people I have met, who are all loyal to His Excellency."

"But what of the trade of which you spoke?"

"Yes. That is something to speak of. Could I not help you to sell more and to make a greater profit?"

"Truly," said Black John, gleefully. "If I had more trade and less protection I could make more than the little that comes my way. The great companies rob the poor man for the rich, and yet they want us to people the country. It is impossible."

"That is my opinion," said Latour, "and I think we agree. I know when they come this way."

"Ah! to be sure. You live at Quebec and know the Intendant?"

"Yes; well?"

"You know when he sends the spies out and who they may be."

"I can always find out."

"Oh! dieu merci! If you would but go into partnership with me."

"That is just what I am thinking. Let us speak of that another time, however."

"Yes; it is as well," and Black John threw another log upon the fire. "The Huron is gone. Humph! But there is no fear. Tell us of the Intendant, monsieur." The Frenchman complied.

CHAPTER II.

M. François Latour was of an accommodating as well as happy disposition. The details of the partnership between him and Black John were quickly settled. Being of the gay and festive sort who treat life as they find it, and are not too scrupulous about it, either, he had had no hesitation in concealing the truth when he divulged to the trader in an easy and off-hand manner the pretended secrets of his mission and of his own opinions. He was on the way to Hudson Bay, it was true, if he chose to continue it, but as a matter of fact he had been prowling about that part of the country for some time in search of contraband traders, and had he found Black John when in the company of any of his men he would have been under the painful necessity of arresting him, a proceeding which, as we have seen, was the very reverse of that which he desired. The moment he opened his eyes after his rescue he had become instantly aware that he was in some secret retreat, a fact still further impressed upon him when he became conscious of the presence of a woman. It was apparently the opportunity he was looking for. The articles of partnership had been gone into minutely, and having been signed, sealed and delivered according to the informal but binding method of that

day—that is, by swearing a variety of confirmatory oaths to the effect that the violator hoped to find himself in a very warm and out-of-the-way place if he should so far forget himself as to break any of the stipulations—Monsieur Latour drank to the health of Black John and the trader returned the compliment, both healths being drunk in contraband brandy. Then Monsieur Latour bade farewell to Marcelle, pouring forth words of compliment and gratitude in a way that did not fail to impress a girl guiltless of the wiles of courtiers and of the art of flattering. Less than an hour after his departure Black John likewise took to the trail, but in a different direction, as he was anxious to meet a party of Neutrals reported to be on their way south. His pack was heavy, for he expected to do a good trade.

As often before, Marcelle was left the sole tenant of the cabin, excepting for her staunch and true four-footed protector, Jean. She was singing merrily. The storm had ceased in the night, and the day was one of unusual splendor. A rap came to the door.

"Oh! it is you, monsieur," exclaimed Marcelle, in surprise. "I thought you had taken the main trail by this time."

"No, demoiselle; I have not yet gone. Will you not go with me to Quebec? I have a strong escort, and you shall be safe, and pardieu! but at Quebec you will make a sensation. I fancy I hear His Excellency say, 'There is better in this country than beavers and foxes. She is like the wild flower of the forest. Mon dieu! But she is beautiful—'"

"Oh, monsieur," began Marcelle, remonstratively.

"Then think of the handsome officers," he continued, without pretending to notice the interruption, the tone of which encouraged him, "the fine houses, balls, dances, and pleasantry always. No dullness, no loneliness like this, and a rich, proud husband. It is glorious—"

"But, monsieur—"

"You may come back if you like. You need not remain if all the gaiety tires you. If you grow weary of the devotion of the gentlemen of His Excellency's court, perchance the King himself—"

"But, papa!" exclaimed Marcelle.

"Your father will be proud," said Latour, decisively, and then adding in a whisper, "Are we not in partnership, and who knows how much good you can do him there. He will be rich, and come to Quebec to live."

"If I could but see him first," pleaded Marcelle.

"It is too late. We are ready. We must start at once. Already my deputy grows suspicious. Speak. Will you come and be a princess at the court?"

Veiling her eyes for a moment with her hands, Marcelle suddenly resolved.

"Yes; I will go. There will be no danger?"

"None, I swear," replied Latour, dramatically. "I will protect you with my life, even to the very gates of the Château St. Louis itself. Then there is the Convent—"

"True," cried Marcelle, joyfully. "I can go there. Very well. I will go," and in a few moments she had

donned her buckskin blouse and fringed leggings. A glance at her moccasins, a touch of her hand upon the little knife at her side to make sure that it was there, and a firmer setting of her beaded cap, and she was ready.

"Wait! I must tie Jean or he will follow. Poor Jean! dear Jean!" and she kissed the dog affectionately as she ran the noose over his head. "There! If papa or the Huron do not come soon he will not starve. He will chew the thong through and be free. Adieu, Jean! Adieu, cabin! Adieu, Huron! Adieu, papa!"

Filled with the excitement of the moment and of the dazzling prospect of the future, Marcelle accompanied Latour to the main trail, where stood a group of men all armed and waiting.

The declining sun was already dipping behind the distant mountain and filling the forest with its evening glow when the start was made. For the moment we shall leave Marcelle and see what the free-trader was doing.

From the western shore of the great lake of the Hurons a party of Neutrals were returning with beaver-skins. How Black John's eyes danced as he saw the profit in store.

"Five hundred crowns!" thought he, "and not one less. No; the partnership does not begin just yet. Let him show what he can do first."

The party of red men greeted Black John cordially and began to trade. First one and then the other

chafed at the small price, but by nightfall the bargain had been struck and the "trade" handed over.

A pipe of peace and the promise of brandy in the morning predisposed all to slumber. The fire was burning low when the shadow of an Indian fell across the light of the dying coals. It was the Huron. He also was returning and had followed the trail of the Neutrals in order to meet Black John, whom he knew would come to trade. Black Hawk, of the Neutrals, knew him well, and he was not molested. The trader and he returned to the cabin together. Black John tried the door, but it was locked. He went to the foot of the tree where the hiding-place of the key was, and found it covered lightly with fallen snow. He jumped up like a madman. "Mon dieu! Huron, where is Marcelle? Follow that trail there. Lose not a moment. See where it leads. Tell me what has happened. Come back quickly." The frenzied words of the free-trader and the barking of Jean were not necessary to urge the Huron to haste. He followed the side-trail carefully to where it joined the main trail, and for more than a league along that.

"She is gone. The trail is old," said he, gloomily, when he returned. "The Frenchman—"

"Be damned!" shrieked Black John, in a passion. "There is his cursed partnership. He lied. He has stolen my daughter." Then he paused. "Any marks of force?"

"No."

"No," echoed Black John. "Oh, the traitress! the

scoundrel! the—but what have they taken? Let us see," and he ran through the house, searching for signs of his being robbed, but there was none.

"What shall we do, Huron? Speak."

"Nothing. Gone south," said the Huron, calmly.

"What! to the lake?"

"Yes."

"Then it is useless. But what had we better do?"

"She want to go," replied the latter, sagaciously.

"Yes; she has deserted us. We shall not follow her. Now I am alone. It is too bad."

For hours they sat in silence. It seemed impossible to both that Marcelle had gone. The laughing eyes, the bewitching ways, her voice that was so sweet when she sang the songs of the coureurs-de-bois, her lively air, her kindly, sympathetic touch—they were stunned by what had happened.

"He is a scoundrel. He has coaxed her away with his pretty speeches and promises. There! If you had not saved him when he fell!" exclaimed Black John, glad to be able to lay the blame on other shoulders.

But the Huron answered not a word. His pride was giving way to feelings of revenge. Black John eyed him curiously.

"We shall see, eh?"

CHAPTER III.

CANADA at this period of its history was a vast scene of wildness and activity. From the great lake of the extreme west to the land of the Acadians all was rivalry of race and turmoil of perpetual strife. To the south lay the country of the relentless Iroquois, those fierce slayers of men, hard by the domain of their allies, the English. To the north of the great lake the Ottawas, the Hurons, the Neutrals, the Montagnais and a hundred other tribes dwelt in terror and savage unrest, in touch and alliance with the French. Blood and burning were in the forest and upon the hill. The red deer, the caribou, the elk, the beaver, the "ermine" were hunted and trapped throughout the interminable wood and by the shores of numberless lakes and rivers. The red men and the white pursued each other without resting from their labor of hate and destruction. What Boston was to the English Quebec and Montreal were to the French, the seats of government and of trade. Situate at the base of the royal mount which has since given to it its name, and at the junction of the Ottawa and the mighty St. Lawrence, Montreal was a trading post of importance and, for those times, of considerable population. It is true that in midsummer, when the red men brought their beaver skins from far and near in

thousands and tens of thousands, and the pelts of the stoat, the fox, the red deer and the bear in numbers scarcely less vast, the population rose with sudden rapidity, but nevertheless all through the year it was a centre of religious and commercial life, and as such never lost its character of the chief emporium of the east.

To Quebec, however, we must look for the source and inspiration of the religious and civil polities which governed these new dominions of Old France. There dwelt the Bishop, supreme in ecclesiastical power, surrounded by the superiors of the various orders, which despatched, from time to time, their missionaries and their martyrs into the remotest parts of this inhospitable region. There dwelt, also, the representative of the King, surrounded by his courtiers and gallants, and by ladies both of French and Canadian birth. The policies of the temporal and spiritual heads of the government of the country were seldom in complete harmony. To the Governor belonged the right of declaring war and of making peace and of conducting and ordering the affairs of New France generally. But to the Bishop was given the administration of the affairs of the Church. Both were hampered by the Intendant, the financial officer of the King. Between these two extremes lay the domain of morals and private life, and the latitude encouraged by a Governor who desired to please a restless and unstable soldiery was not to the liking of the more ascetic and pious Bishop. From the first, ceaseless complaints had been carried to the King, who, worn

out with the constant bickerings of men more than a thousand leagues away, besought them each in turn to live with the other in peace and Christian fellowship. The Bishop remonstrated with the Governor in vain. Officers, wearied with superintending the building of the fort and with the ceaseless guarding of the city from surprise and capture, continued to seek relaxation in gaieties that sometimes partook of licence. The noblesse, living in idleness, if not in affluence, came here in increasing numbers from their domains to join in the revelries of the long winter season.

As one looked from the river landward Quebec presented a pleasing picture. The fort and citadel sat like a crown upon the top of the precipitous cliff against whose sides the city proper was built, the houses clinging like the nests of sea-birds to its face, whilst skirting the water was a motley array of cabins, magazines, cabarets, wharf-sheds, warehouses, tents and what not, a make-up to suit the convenience of travellers and traders alike. The fringe of land along the water's edge to the right is the camping-ground of Indians, whether Abenaquis and Montagnais or Hurons, Ottawas and the Algonquins proper, whose hunting-ground lay to the north and west. The large heavy-looking buildings standing out prominently are the Château St. Louis, the Château de Quebec, the Convent, the Seminary and the great Cathedral. All are of stone and built to withstand the ravages of time and ill-fortune. Streets, narrow, ill-paved and winding, served for communication, excepting where the town gates intervened. From the Château St.

Louis Frontenac could look far out over the land which he held in trust for the King of France, and often his searching eye scanned the river and the converging trails leading to the city to see if the dreaded Iroquois were not about to burst in sudden fury upon him again.

"I tell you that Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier will be obeyed."

"And by whom?" asked Captain St. Just, with a touch of superciliousness for so gallant a gentleman.

"Ah! yes—by whom?" said Madame Ange, with a sigh. "To think that His Excellency will dare to defy the mandements of the good Bishop. What can he expect to come of it but disaster?"

"Now, come, Madame Ange," said Captain St. Just, in a more persuasive tone. "What earthly harm can befall through a few plays being performed for the amusement of a lot of us poor devils, shut up as we are for the best part of our existence. It is too severe. It is inhuman to stop them."

"What have I to say, or you, when the Bishop speaks? It is a very bad example, very bad!" said Madame Ange, decidedly.

"But everybody—all Quebec—is with His Excellency," exclaimed St. Just.

"Thank you, Captain St. Just," and Madame Ange smiled with quiet triumph.

"Of course I do not mean everybody. I mean —"

"Those who want 'Le Tartuffe' and other caricatures of sacred things," suggested Madame Ange.

"Ah! pardon me, Madame Ange," said her visitor,

in despair, "must we languish in our barracks like flies in winter, plastered against the ceiling or the walls?"

"You have heard the mandement?" Madame Ange replied, with firmness.

"I have heard it," said St. Just, "and I may say that His Excellency will not obey it."

"He will—he must. Will he defy God?" Madame Ange cried, with animation.

Captain St. Just did not reply.

This conversation took place in one of the salons of Quebec, to dignify them in accordance with their assumption of vice-regal ceremony. Madame Ange's house was but a few steps from the Château St. Louis. Like the rest it was of stone, but inelegantly built. This was but one of a hundred similar conversations of the day. It was the haughty Frontenac against Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, Bishop of Quebec. Even the Iroquois and the New England invaders were sometimes forgotten in the turmoil. Friends parted from friends with anathemas. Duels were fought. Even the King of France himself was at his wits' end to stop it.

"Monseigneur will triumph in the end. The Church always wins," continued Madame Ange.

"Never!" replied St. Just, fiercely, unable to conceal his annoyance longer.

"What of the hundred crowns?" asked Madame Ange, archly.

"A mere rumor got up by the priests. There will be no compromise."

"Father Le Caron," announced the servant, and the renowned priest advanced into the apartment.

Captain St. Just disdained to await him, and almost rudely seizing Madame Ange's hand in saying good-bye, brushed roughly past him as he entered.

"What of this dreadful rebellion against Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier's authority? When will it end?" asked Madame Ange.

"It is already ended, thanks be to God," replied Father Le Caron, calmly. "We should hear no more of it. The Bishop gave to His Excellency one hundred crowns. It was not a bribe, but a bounty to the poor."

"Oh! heaven be thanked," exclaimed Madame Ange, piously. "I have been so disturbed. Will the plays cease?"

"Of that sort, yes. There is no objection as yet to the others," said the priest.

"No; that is true. But will Frontenac triumph?"

"God alone triumphs," said Father Le Caron, with uplifted hand.

CHAPTER IV.

BLACK JOHN had become unbearably cross. The haughty nonchalance of the Huron, too, had given way to moodiness and discontent. The cabin had become like an Indian wigwam, dirty and unkempt. Had Marcelle suddenly returned she would have been dismayed at its appearance.

They sat before the fire as usual.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Black John, with a half sneer.

"Yes; the Huron will go."

"Ha! They would like to catch me in Quebec. They would put a pretty ribbon about my neck and give it a jerk to make it secure, eh, Monsieur Huron?" and Black John gnashed his teeth with rage. "But I will go if there were a hundred companies and two hundred excellencies living on the fat of the land. Pardieu! It is terrible. I will show them. I will take Marcelle by force and I will bring her back—the little wretch, to leave me—and we will go to the Blue Mountains. Eh, Huron?"

The Indian nodded his head sedately.

"You have never been at Quebec? No. I have. I came from there once. Ha! Ha!" and Black John laughed gleefully at the thought of illicit brandy and contraband trade and how it had robbed the rich

entrepreneurs of many a hundred crowns. "Yes, when the river opens we will go."

"No trail, then," said the Huron, slyly.

"No. They may follow us and what can they see? Eh? The water. Eh? Ah! Marcelle, you will not play your old father tricks any more."

As Black John said this he took a little print out of his leathern pocket. It was of a French peasant girl, but so like Marcelle when little that he had carefully preserved it. It was his only consolation now, and as he looked at it in the firelight a tear stole down his black and weather-stained cheek. The Huron put a log on the fire.

"Look at it, Huron," said Black John, in a broken voice. "It is Marcelle."

"No," said the Huron, glancing at it sullenly and handing it back again.

Jean began to bark furiously. The Huron went to the door. But Jean put his paws on his master's shoulder and yelped again in a whining way.

"Who's there?" demanded the trader.

"It is nothing," replied the Huron.

"Why did Jean bark, then? He is never mistaken. There must be."

"No," said the Huron. "You say, 'Marcelle.'"

"Yes, yes; it is that," cried Black John, weeping copiously and fondling the dog, who stood ready to bark again. "Ah, Marcelle, what made you leave me? It was wicked."

The Huron sat stolidly still, waiting for the old coureur to recover himself.

"We will build a canoe and have it ready for the spring?" said Black John, looking inquiringly at his companion.

"Yes," said the latter.

"And what had we better do about it?"

"Make it swift and for three," continued the Huron.

"Yes; if we get Marcelle they will pursue us for Iroquois, and if they catch us they will know me for the free-trader, and they will shoot you, Huron, sure."

"Yes, I know that; but can you paddle?"

"Why?"

"Because Huron will build canoe for two, then."

"And leave Marcelle?"

"No; leave you."

"Sacré! Huron, you shall not. Paddle or no paddle, I will go through it all," exclaimed Black John, vehemently.

"Why not you stay at home?" said the Huron.

"And wait till you come back?"

"Yes."

"I did not think of that. You mean you will go alone and fetch her back here?"

"Yes."

Black John dropped his chin upon his finger in deep thought. "It might be. You will take a small canoe, then?" he said.

"Yes. Carry it through the woods, too."

"That is true," said Black John, decidedly. "You could travel so much faster. But I will go with you to the Lake of the Sorcerers. It will help you on your way, and then I can prepare the place for us to fly to when pursued."

The Huron smiled and assented. He had supreme confidence in his own powers, but none in Black John's, whose day was nearly done. He stood up and moved about as if already on the trail.

"Now that this is agreed to I will get the bark and you shall get to work," and Black John went to his store-room, where he kept his supply of bark and the models of canoes of different size to build upon.

When they had selected the frame, it was brought in and set down with great care and precision. The Huron then set to work. He first of all stretched the strips of bark and oiled them. Then, binding the cross strips, which were of elm, upon the model frame, he wound them securely together. There was plenty of time—weeks yet—till the waters would open, but his impatience was too great for delay. The strip ends were sewn tightly to the gunwale piece, and the cross strips strengthened with blocks inserted in between. The frail craft was at length completed. She was as stiff as she was light, and a pride and joy to them both. At the bow the Huron embroidered his totem, and it then remained but to make the paddles. How carefully he worked at these! He took days to choose and try the wood, and then he cut, scraped and carved it with the dexterity of a sculptor. "In the paddle lies the speed" was the Huron's motto.

"Ugh! try that," he said, at last.

Black John leaned upon one side and then upon the other of each paddle. They bounded back like trap springs when he lifted his hand.

"Beautiful! Well done!" said he, with admiration. "Now for the hot sun and it will not be long till Marcelle will once more come back to us. Eh, Huron?"

What time Black John had been able to spare of his days and nights from looking at the building of the canoe and the making of the paddles he devoted to making ready for removal, so that when the Huron returned he should be prepared to flee. The lower tier of pistols, knives, Indian work, pipes and the thousand little trinkets of the wilderness stuck here and there upon the wall were packed away before the great head of the moose, the mighty antlers of the elk and cariboo and the dried body of a huge maskinonge that lay along the wall near the ceiling for fully five feet were taken down with care and deposited upon the floor.

"Will you cut across to the main trail?" asked Black John, as a detail of the escape and flight occurred to him.

"Don't know," replied the Huron, musingly; "may take to the water again."

"That will be it," cried Black John, enthusiastically. "If you leave the river and portage, it will throw them off altogether, and they will follow the trail."

"Maybe both," suggested the Huron.

"Ah! that will be bad," said Black John, in dismay. "Let the good God protect her. It will be enough."

The deep earnestness of the old trader as he uttered this prayer drew the attention of the Huron, who had been more accustomed to curses from him than aught else. But the chief smiled derisively, since he dis-

dained to call upon his own manitou in times of trial. What he owed to his guardian spirit he gave, but at a time when he was not in need of its assistance. When he was in need he expected to receive its protection without asking for it and as a reward for his faithfulness.

Everything being in readiness for action when the time should come, the Huron set off once more for his traps and Black John to do a little trading. To his joy the free-trader met a large party of Ottawas near where the Dogribs lived, who waited for the moving of the ice to go on to Ville Marie, or Montreal, as it was indifferently called. What better? The Huron could join them, and it would be a long way on his journey. Having made a good trade of beads and brandy for the unpacked fur, besides having arranged for the going of the Huron (and the Hurons were not then friendly with the Ottawas), he returned home in high glee to sit in silence and alone, save for the company of Jean, till the chief should come back. Jean also watched for the chief's coming, and gave more than one false warning of his approach. At last he did come in, however, late one wild, cold night, the snow frozen to the fringes of his leggings and little icicles hanging like pendants upon the leathern tassels about his neck. His moccasins, too, were stiff with the long tramp. Hanging up the snow-laden snow-shoes, the Huron took his seat by the fire, while Black John fetched the jerked bear's-meat and a bowl of soup.

"Eat that till the soup gets hot," said he, handing

the bear's meat to the Huron and putting the soup kettle on the hook. "I have good news to tell you." He drew a stool over and sat down.

"I met Ottawas at the Dogrib ford this morning," he began, but the Huron looked sullen and remained silent.

"They are going down the water trail, too," he continued.

The chief grunted contemptuously.

"No, no; you are too stiff, Huron. It will be a good thing. I made arrangements for you if you will go. But we can see. What think you?"

The Huron considered, and then relenting, spoke, as usual, briefly:

"Yes; it would be well. I will go."

"Good Huron! brave Huron!" said Black John, in ecstasy, patting him on the back; but the Huron scowled and Black John desisted. The Huron was mindful of the inaction of the Ottawas when the Iroquois swept away the Huron villages to the south.

"What if Marcelle refuses to come?" asked the Huron presently.

"Fetch her!" cried Black John, without waiting to swear.

"No," said the Huron, determinedly.

"What the devil do you go for, then?" asked the trader, bridling up. "Sacré! Huron, it is impossible. You drive me mad. Are we children to be baulked by a girl? Eh? Answer me that?"

The Huron's wounded pride had grown at first into a desire for revenge, but it in turn had become lost in

a passionate longing for Marcelle. He could not answer Black John; it was futile. Her image came before his mind's eye with painful clearness. If she would not return he would go far into the wilderness and die, but he had no thought to compel her.

Black John watched the impassive face for a sign, but there was none.

"Huron, you have no soul. You are like a piece of ice. You will not melt," and with a sudden petulant energy the free-trader began again his impatient walk up and down the cabin floor.

"No; you will not bring her at all hazards, whether she will or no. Very well; I will go, too. I will bring her."

The Huron looked up in surprise.

"Yes, I will go myself; I will go. I might as well be hanged as stay here," and Black John paused triumphantly to look at the Huron.

"Why throw your life to the dogs?" asked the Huron.

"Yes, they will kill me, but I will have seen Marcelle," and the old trader put his hands to his eyes and sobbed like a child.

For a moment the Huron was affected; the long suspense was beginning to tell. Then he shook himself together once more and straightened up. The sudden flash of his eye was like the lighting of a beacon upon a distant hill. It was a signal of something strange; but he kept his thoughts discreetly to himself.

CHAPTER V.

When Marcelle obeyed her craving for adventure and gave way to the not unnatural desire to visit the great city of Quebec, of which she had heard so much, but which she had never seen or seemed likely to see, she was fully aware of the heartbreak which she would leave behind her. But what of that? She intended to return before the winter came again, and then she would be prized more than ever, and would be able to tell of what she had seen at the city and thus while away the long evenings with her father and the Huron. She had long chafed under the solitariness of her life in the wilderness, where she seldom met with one of her own sex, either white or red, and she felt that it was due to her, although her father thought otherwise, that she should have an outing in the fashionable world and learn something of the ways of city life. Upon Monsieur Latour, as a gentleman, she implicitly relied. His flattery she took rather as something she could not avoid, yet she was not loth to turn his admiration to her own advantage. The escort was at once a satisfaction of propriety and an affair of distinction, whilst the convent at the city would be, no matter what might happen, a sure and certain haven of security. For the rest she had no fear. Her life in the forest had rendered her oblivious of the perils

and fatigues of such a journey. It was a chance not to be had twice; hence her resolve to seize it.

When they had reached the main trail and joined the waiting party one of the toboggans was at once made ready for her use. Though she had no fear of walking, which she had practised assiduously since her early youth, both as an exercise and a pastime, she yielded to Monsieur Latour's advice that she should save her strength as much as possible in case of need, since it was not to be supposed that she could vie with men inured to travel in such a journey as lay before her. Although accustomed to that spirit of devotion and politeness which is inherent in the natures of the French and the Indian, she now became so much the object of it that she laughed gaily at the ready obedience of the men, who almost quarrelled with each other for the honor of drawing her toboggan. Latour walked beside her.

"What think you of pursuit, demoiselle?" asked he, addressing her by that abbreviation of title then applied to unmarried ladies. "Is there no danger?"

"Indeed, yes," said Marcelle, "if we go south. I implore you to avoid that, for if the Huron traces us he is likely to do anything."

"He could do nothing against so many."

"Ah, yes, indeed, monsieur; you do not know him. He is the greatest warrior of the Hurons," replied Marcelle, proudly.

Their conversation was interrupted by the sudden return of the advance scout. He spoke a few hurried words in a low tone to Latour.

"Blessed Mary! It is the Iroquois," exclaimed the latter. Marcelle turned pale at the announcement.

Soon another scout came in to say that there were only seven.

"Then we must fight," said Latour, giving an order or two.

A short distance back on the trail they had passed a clear open space that led to a bend in the river. Thither they now retraced their course to take up a position. A crafty Montagnais led the way, followed by Marcelle and Latour, the remainder of the party bringing up the rear. After going a few hundred yards the Montagnais took them off the trail and led them back to it again almost at the point where they had left it. In following them up the Iroquois would have to pass the hiding-place. It was cunningly done, and the men were apportioned out to different trees, behind which they could await the passing foe. It was almost nightfall before the latter appeared, following the trail, as usual, in single file, but moving boldly and rapidly. It was a time of intense suspense and Marcelle durst scarcely breathe. When the Iroquois were well within range of the ambush the Montagnais fired. Before he had time to utter his war-whoop the others had followed his signal. Five of the Iroquois fell. The other two, instead of fleeing, turned and rushed forward into the wood whence the firing proceeded, being over-bold because they were Iroquois. The forest now rang with cries and the sound of fighting, but the number and courage of Latour's men secured the speedy death of their assailants.

"That was well done, Deersfoot," said Latour, walking up to the Montagnais. "We must now seek shelter for the night. Do you think there are any more of them?"

"No," replied the Montagnais. "That is the way they travel now—no more than that."

The tents were pitched in a grove of heavy elms, Marcelle's in the centre. The customary preparation and cooking of food was omitted, and all excepting Latour and a half-breed turned in. Though fearless at home and among "the friendlies," Marcelle shuddered as she thought of being carried away captive by the Iroquois; but as the night wore on without further sign of molestation she recovered her courage, and as the dawn broke was sleeping soundly. Latour and his companion of the long vigil likewise refreshed themselves with slumber, and it was well on in the day before the journey was resumed, the course this time being directed more to the north, to escape further interruption.

Marcelle had been accustomed to shoot almost from infancy. Although she would have hesitated to shoot a man except in self-defence, she had several fine sets of antlers to her credit and the pelt of an enormous bear.

One day at noon a scout came in with the information that a herd of moose were feeding in the valley beyond. Marcelle was instantly thrilled with the enthusiasm of the chase.

"Let me shoot, too, monsieur," she cried; "I am getting out of practice."

A musket was handed to her, one of the lighter and shorter-barrelled sort, and Latour followed her, the scout leading the way. Along the trail about half a mile or so they came to a ridge of rock that cut across it at right angles. Mounting this, and working their way carefully, they reached the summit, the scout at last putting up his hand warningly as the moose came in view. Marcelle crawled forward cautiously, and from behind the shelter of a boulder espied the deer feeding quietly upon their favorite rock-moss, patches of which here and there protruded through the snow. Disdaining the rest which the ground would have afforded her, she raised her musket, and taking deliberate aim, fired. The scout grinned with delight. Her aim had been true. The others moved quickly off, and the travellers advanced to where the fallen moose lay. He was a fine specimen of his kind, and with the aid of the remainder of the escort was borne to the camp in triumph.

Having left that part of the forest roamed by the merciless Iroquois well behind, but little fear of them remained. It was quite possible that they might venture so far into their enemy's country, but not so probable as to occasion alarm. A feeling of security and relief succeeded the constant, if subdued, dread of the earlier part of the journey. The frequent pines, rising to a great height, afforded a shelter from prying eyes that made the glare of a fire or a column of smoke a matter of indifference. Through the rougher country Marcelle went on foot in preference to the discomfort of being dragged over rocks

and ridges of uneven ground. The long journey was gradually nearing an end and signs of approaching civilization began to multiply.

Tracks of snowshoes were visible at frequent intervals, bespeaking the wanderings of Montagnais or of the coureurs-de-bois and their own approach to a rendezvous or centre of population. One of the men attacked by the Iroquois in their dash into the wood had received a severe wound in the arm from a blow of a tomahawk, and every evening as the fire was lighted Marcelle unwound the wrapping and cleansed the wound. On one occasion, as he sat by the fire, she knelt beside him, and having finished the dressing was in the act of assisting herself to rise by putting her hand gently upon his shoulder. Latour had been standing at the opposite side of the fire looking on, when, at sight of this tender familiarity upon Marcelle's part, his jealous wrath burst into a flame. Not waiting to complete the half circuit of the fire, he leaped across it and struck the wounded man a resounding blow upon the head.

"You are shamming, you wretch!" he cried fiercely, "and I bid you get into the woods and leave us. Dog! to deceive us with a scratch a child would laugh at."

Marcelle interfered and stepped between.

"Hold! Monsieur Latour. The man—"

"He is a coward," protested Latour, excitedly.

"No," said Marcelle; "he is brave. He alone received a wound."

Stung by this supposed reference to himself, Latour's fury redoubled, and, drawing his knife, he made ready to attack the object of his jealous hatred, who

now stood some yards away, but fearless. Marcelle sprang forward and seized him by the arm, screaming for help. The sound of angry voices had reached the ears of the men near at hand, however, and these came into camp on the run. At Marcelle's bidding they seized Latour and held him till he regained his senses.

"I crave your pardon," said Latour, blandly. "It looked to me the man was treating you as his equal."

"What, then?" said Marcelle. "It is so. He is brave; he is the equal of any."

Impatient at the prolonged reference to a mere serving-man, and angry at the part played by himself, which his men would, of course, divine to be inspired by jealousy, Latour withdrew to his tent in silence.

The wounded man, however, declined to advance farther with the party, and struck off sullenly upon a course of his own.

When the sun of the last morning rose it was upon a brilliant scene. To the south, but far away in the distance, gleamed the shining roof of a city temple as a star gleams when first the moon is rising. Beyond an occasional remark from the men, scarce a sound was heard other than the steady tread of the snowshoes on the snow. To Marcelle it was a moment of intense excitement, but she preserved her calm. At the first conviction that it was the great city, the long-desired end of her pilgrimage, a pang of homesickness shot through her bosom and she would have gladly returned to her cabin home, but with one look of hopeless longing at the forest behind her she turned her face once more towards the city and resolutely journeyed on.

CHAPTER VI.

In a room of the St. Louis barracks fronting upon the square two officers of the Guard sat over their wine. The wind was blowing with great force and occasionally snow was lashed furiously against the windows. In the broad fireplace the logs burned briskly and the room was filled with a warmth and glow that contrasted pleasantly with the weather without.

"They say that His Excellency laughed at Saint-Vallier, but will yield," remarked La Montagne, a man of years and moderate views. "If it is not untrue, he has yielded already, and yet I do not believe it."

St. Just turned sharply to the other and said: "La Montagne, you are beside yourself to throw doubt upon the courage of His Excellency or to credit the stupidities of Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. What could have been more ridiculous than his conduct at Montreal? The Récollets place De Callière's priedieu in the aisle where it ought to be, but His Lordship, forsooth, finding the passage narrow, puts it to one side without ceremony."

"What! without ceremony, and in a church, too?" said La Montagne.

"Yes. You are very droll. But it is important that some stand shall be taken, and we must be on one

side or the other—for His Excellency or for the Bishop."

"For God or for the King?"

"You are stupid, too. I will not go on if you are not more reasonable.

"Yes; I will be silent. I am for His Excellency," said La Montagne, who delighted in teasing his companion, but knew when to stop.

"Now that is as it should be," said St. Just, "and I know that when it comes before the King—"

"The what?" gasped La Montagne, who had not foreseen the notoriety.

"Yes; it will come before the King—at any rate, before the Sovereign Council—"

"Ah!" said La Montagne, relieved, "of which His Excellency is president?"

"But it is the King's Council," affirmed St. Just, solemnly.

"And will Saint-Vallier run his head into that noose?" asked La Montagne, doubtfully.

"I will not listen to such scandal. It is insufferable!" exclaimed St. Just, rising.

"Chut! mon ami; I speak as a notary. Did I not play notary's clerk last November?"

"Yes, but this is no subject for chopping logic on. What would His Excellency do if he suffered defeat?"

"Take the hundred pistoles," suggested La Montagne, maliciously.

"Never!" cried St. Just, fiercely; "that he will never do. What! when he turns back the Iroquois and the English alike, to give way to a stupid and turbulent priest?"

"But about De Callière?" observed La Montagne.

"Yes; he put the Récollets under the ban for that," replied St. Just; "but he cannot put His Excellency under the ban, I assure you. Mind you, trade is suffering. The coureurs-de-bois, finding supervision lax, are growing insolent and rich. In all my life I never saw such damnable conduct. Where would religion be without churches and missions, and where would churches and missions be without trade, eh?" St. Just's voice had risen to a high pitch of conviction.

"St. Just," said La Montagne, calmly sending a puff of smoke up amongst the timbers and settling into an easier position, "you are inimitable. There's nothing like it left in France."

"Send up a bottle," said St. Just, in disgust.

"But hear me," continued La Montagne. "Where did you get this knowledge of religion and of—morals?"

"Have you heard anything lately?" asked St. Just, significantly.

"No. Something new, eh? Let's have it," said La Montagne, with energy.

"Oh well! I shall not circulate anything. I merely asked you if you had heard anything, because then we could talk about it."

"I did hear something," said La Montagne, looking at St. Just narrowly.

"What was it?" asked St. Just.

"Well, my dear fellow, I am in the same case with you. I have a prejudice against circulating things, you know."

"Ah!" exclaimed St. Just, dryly; "I see then that madame has told you."

"No; she has not. But in a demoiselle—"

"Yes, yes; I suppose so. It is a different story," and St. Just put back his head to laugh with greater insolence; "but the bottle?"

"To the devil with the bottle! Come, St. Just, you do not mean to quarrel with me. Besides I am your superior officer. Out with it like a friend and a man."

"You mean a woman?"

"Yes, anything; but go on."

"There is yet to be a play," said St. Just, solemnly.

"It will never be. I will wager you ten pistoles," replied La Montagne.

"Done! The order has been secretly given."

"Not 'Tartuffe'?" and La Montagne looked quizzical.

"No, not 'Tartuffe,' but a better."

"Then the Bishop wins," and La Montagne laughed triumphantly.

St. Just was annoyed. "You will see," said he, quietly.

At this moment there was a noise at the gate and a challenge from the sentry.

Both men sprang up. A soldier ran in to inform them that there was a serious riot in the town. Hurriedly putting on their greatcoats and ordering a few pikemen and musketeers to follow, they ran in the direction indicated by the soldier. The sound of strife and pillaging soon reached their ears.

"It is the coureurs-de-bois again," exclaimed St. Just, as he ran.

"Yes; they are devils. His Excellency must hang a few more." As La Montagne finished, they turned the corner and were in full view of the scene of tumult. The door of the inn being open, a flood of light upon the snow revealed the combat then going on. Coureurs-de-bois and soldiers were engaged in a fierce struggle. The savage shouts of the former and their desperate energy had alarmed the innkeeper, who had sent to the barracks for help.

St. Just sprang at once upon the nearest outlaw, but failed to bear him down. His companion and the file of soldiers following rushed past him into the middle of the mêlée.

"Prisoners, in the King's name!" shouted La Montagne, with a voice of authority.

A defiant yell from the coureurs-de-bois was the response. Both sides being out of breath, and the soldiers, though superior in number, being pretty well used up besides, St. Just determined, during the pause, upon a challenge.

"I will fight Lebrun for peace or brandy!" he cried, in a loud voice.

"Lebrun is not here; I am the captain," replied a coureur, stepping forward instantly upon hearing the challenge. "What would you have?"

"Peace, in the King's name," replied St. Just.

"Or the gibbet?"

"You know the law."

"But I do not fear it," and with that the agile coureur was upon St. Just like a flash.

The quarters were too close for sword-play, but not for the dirk of the coureur.

St. Just was upon his back in the snow, the coureur grasping him by the throat. La Montagne sprang forward and seized the outlaw, bearing him over. Instantly the tumult was renewed, but St. Just, rising, parried La Montagne's thrust.

"It is brandy; he could have killed me," he said, huskily, and raising his hand.

Thereupon La Montagne gave the order to forbear, and without paying further attention to their wounds Lebrun's lieutenant and the two officers entered the inn.

"What is this all about? Your name?" said St. Just, addressing the coureur, as he raised his glass in salutation.

"Latour," replied the coureur, frowning suggestively.

"Pray what of him? I have not heard of him for months," asked St. Just, who besides being grateful for his life bore in mind His Excellency's desire to have but one source of disturbance of the peace of the King at a time, and that just now the Bishop.

"He has returned with a captive."

"An Iroquois chief, I suppose?"

"No, pardieu! the daughter of a coureur," exclaimed the outlaw, with a roar of rage and smashing his glass upon the floor.

"Easy, my friend, easy!" said St. Just, soothingly. "His Excellency will redress a wrong, if it is such."

"If he will not, we will," replied the coureur.

"Let us hear of it," said St. Just.

"Yes; let us hear of it," repeated La Montagne, in a commanding tone.

"It is not necessary; the Bishop will protect her," said the coureur.

"Ah! there it is again," exclaimed St. Just, unguardedly; "always the Bishop." And then, changing his tone, "My friend, what is your name?"

The coureur looked at him cunningly. "Jean," said he.

"Jean what; your other name?" said La Montagne.

The coureur laughed outright.

"We change our names too frequently to remember. I forget mine; but I am always Jean."

La Montagne shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"Then, Jean, if it must be so, what is it you would say of Monsieur Latour?"

"Nothing," replied the coureur, with a sneer, as he took the glass of brandy handed him by the innkeeper.

La Montagne looked sheepish, but divined the meaning.

"True, you may not wish to speak ill of one so distinguished in the favor of His Excellency—"

"No; of the Bishop," interrupted St. Just. "Latour is no friend of His Excellency. You remember the—"

"Yes," said La Montagne, taking the hint and correcting himself; "he is high in the favor of the Bishop, but then we must have justice. His Excellency will see to that."

The coureur was interested.

"Let him tell it, La Montagne. If there has been a wrong it shall be righted. I pledge His Excellency's word for that," said St. Just.

Jean made ready to speak.

"Brandy once more," said St. Just, turning to the innkeeper. As the glasses were filled the coureur glanced from one to the other, and then began:

"Six or seven of us came in from Lac St. Joseph, and by the road yonder, where we met a man who had been injured in the forest," said he, pointing in that direction. "We travelled all night and brought with us a heavy pack. We had passed the Tête du Cerf when we saw men ahead coming our way. We slipped into the bush, thinking it might be one of the noblesse or of the Intendant's party. They came along and we heard the sound of weeping. It was very soft, but not too soft for us to hear. It was a woman. Her head was down and her face hidden. The rest marched in front and behind in silence. One of my men twitched me by the sleeve. 'Latour,' he whispered. It was true; that was the brute. It was he who killed the squaw. Just then I saw the red patch of buckskin and I sprang into the road. 'Halt!' I cried. Latour would have brushed me aside, but could not. 'What have you there?' I asked. Instead of answering he called to his men and drew his own sword. There was a flash, and a bullet went through my coat here at the shoulder, but my men came down too quickly for the others to fire.

"'What is this? How dare you stand in my way? I am Monsieur de Latour.' 'Who shot the squaw and

who struck Sigurd in the forest,' I said. He was furious. 'Know, Monsieur le Baron de Latour, that she was the friend of the coureurs-de-bois, and now—' Pardieu! but with a scream the woman was at my feet. 'God be thanked!' she said; 'you will not see me suffer. I am one of you. I am the daughter of Black John. I beg of you to save me from this traitor.' She was very beautiful. I took her from him. I knew Black John. We did not waste words. She is with the nuns. He will not strike Sigurd again so quickly."

La Montagne and St. Just would have heard more, but the coureur assured them that there was no more. The two officers looked at each other for a moment, and, with the interchange of a word or two, made ready to depart.

"You have done well, Monsieur Jean," said St. Just, extending his hand, which the coureur took. "We will not forget you. You are both good and brave, I see."

La Montagne followed his companion's example, and then they passed out of the door, and, with a word to the soldiers, who formed and marched away, turned in the opposite direction. After leaving the hair and wig-dresser's, where their disordered apparel and headgear were attended to, they took the direction of the convent.

"There will be trouble over this," said St. Just.

"It was very unfortunate. Where are you going now?" said La Montagne, who always left matters of policy to his more astute companion.

"To the convent," replied St. Just. "We must tell

this woman that she is under the protection of the King. At all hazards we must keep things quiet and out of the hands of the Bishop. Latour is a fool."

"A common wench! Pshaw! what does it matter?" said La Montagne, puffing out his lips.

"Not to us, truly, but you see it matters to the coureurs-de-bois, and, by Heaven! if they join the Bishop we shall have to treat with the Iroquois, and then what will the King say?"

"His Majesty is sending a regiment at this time," retorted La Montagne.

"Yes," laughed St. Just; "like all the promised regiments, a few soldiers of the line and officers of the nobility, who are more intent upon beaver-skins than upon withstanding the assaults of the English and Iroquois."

"But a hundred thousand crowns—"

"Yes, yes; I know a hundred thousand crowns is a great temptation, but who will pay it if the English succeed? The forts are useless along the river. Except at Quebec ten men and an officer could set us at defiance," said St. Just.

"You exaggerate. What of Trois Rivières, Champlain, the Saut, eh?" asked La Montagne. "What of an officer and ten men there? Not so fast, my comrade; there is reason in all things."

"You do not see far enough, La Montagne," replied St. Just. "The English have made many attacks even upon the city itself. They are but recently driven off. They are planning, we know, for a descent upon Acadia, while to the west all is in the hands of the accursed Iroquois. So sure as the war goes on, or

begins again in Europe, there will be a sudden cutting off of all supplies from France. With ourselves we are on the brink of a civil war. Monseigneur is determined to set military and civil power at naught, relying upon prayers and miracles. Under such conditions the English will not fail next time. Then the coureurs-de-bois, hearing that His Excellency no longer has supremacy, will ignore the laws of trade altogether. They are so insolent now that they walk in and out of the city as they see fit, and, as we have seen, do not fear to brawl with us and treat us with contempt."

"Ah! if Frontenac wished he could wind these fine fellows up in short order," said La Montagne, reassuringly; "but just now he is thinking of more important things. This quarrel with the Bishop is unfortunate."

"Yes, and worse," said St. Just; "and we must do all we can to checkmate His Lordship."

"You think, then, that the rumored settlement of the difficulty is untrue?" suggested La Montagne.

"I have already expressed my opinion. When men quarrel they do not forget it as readily as they pretend. If there is a truce, we must use it to strengthen our defences and mark—"

"Here we are," said La Montagne. "We had better hold our peace. What do you propose to do?"

They were in front of the main door of the great Ursuline Convent.

"Let us hear what this woman has to say. We may forestall an intrigue."

"Agreed! although we may easily meddle too much without instructions. You must do the talking."

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Latour and his party came in sight of Quebec the light of a glorious morning was, as we have said, enhanced by the gleaming of church spires and of the windows of the houses that here and there caught the sun's rays and seemed aglow with flame.

"We will enter by the eastern gate," said Latour, at the same time making a sign to the man in advance, who, since they were out of the forest and free of danger, had fallen back near the main body. Instantly the course was changed, but as the sign, not as the words, indicated.

"Is that the convent?" asked Marcelle, pointing to a huge building that began to loom up as they approached.

"No; that is the Château St. Louis, the residence of His Excellency."

"And that?" she asked again.

"It is the Château de Quebec you see yonder."

"But can we not see the convent? Is it not large enough?"

"It is indeed large enough," Latour replied, smiling; "but the buildings which you have already seen hide it from view. You will be able to see it from the gate. Do you see that great house yonder where the group of trees is?" and he pointed to the west, where, just

over the brow of the hill, it came prominently into view.

"Oh, what a lovely place!" exclaimed Marcelle, with rapture, as she caught sight of the fine structure and its surroundings. "It must be the house of some great lord to be so big as that."

"It is mine," said Latour, quietly, at the same time watching the effect of his announcement.

"Ah! Monsieur Latour, you must be very rich and great. You have been deceiving us. You do not trade, I am sure?" said Marcelle.

"On the contrary, I do engage in trade—not personally, perhaps; but then we all do, even His Excellency himself," said Latour.

"Is it so very profitable?" asked Marcelle.

"Very," replied Latour. "In a few years we make enough money to return—to go to France and to the court of the King if we like, where everything is so great and splendid."

"Have you ever been there?"

"Yes; three years ago I was received in audience by His Majesty. There were many of the great men and women of France there, too. I remember well the Duchess de Naganure, the loveliest woman in France. She was very pleasant to me,—indeed, it was the remark of the court; but lest I should make the King jealous, I withdrew. It would have stood in my way. I am to be made a duke for services in the war. If I had had a wife the decoration would have been conferred a year ago; but then I was not at that time in love."

"You are, then, in love now, monsieur?" said Marcelle, gaily. "She will, no doubt, be long since ready to welcome your return."

"I wish it were so," he replied, solemnly.

"You are afraid, then, that she will have forgotten you? Fie! monsieur, women are not like that—certainly not in the forest. When we women of the forest are in love, it is all we have and all we think of."

"Ah! then you have been in love?" said Latour, sadly.

"No, no!" said Marcelle, quickly. "You have mistaken me. I did not say what I did or thought. I spoke of the women of the wilderness. We are not so many that we do not know."

"But you yourself are all French, are you not?" asked Latour. "Your mother was French?"

"No; my mother was Huron, the daughter of a chief slain by the Iroquois—but where are we going to? The gate is there, is it not? We are going away from it," and the sudden change in Marcelle's tone indicated some alarm.

"Just for the moment," said Latour. "I want to show you my estate and its beauties—"

"But I would rather go another time, monsieur," said Marcelle, halting and looking questioningly at Latour.

"If you do not go now you will not be able to go at all. I know how the good sisters will do. They will say that you are young and innocent, and that you must not go anywhere without their permission and

escort. But what they would not mind since it has been done they would frown upon if it were about to be undertaken. It is one of the most beautiful places in the world, as you have seen. Let us move quickly and we shall be back at the gate before nightfall. My old housekeeper will be so glad to see you. Set out, men; advance!"

But Marcelle stood still. She had a frightened look, and turned her eyes repeatedly towards the city.

"Marcelle," said Latour, sternly, "I will explain to you when you wish, but in the meantime we must advance. You are unkind."

"I will not go, monsieur," said Marcelle, firmly. "I will go to the convent myself," and she turned in her tracks and made off towards the city.

"Halt, Marcelle! How dare you defy me!" cried Latour, red with rage. Seeing her hastening her pace, he sped after her. "I will show you that I am not to be defied," said he, reaching out and seizing her by the arm.

Marcelle screamed, and with a sudden blow knocked his hand loose, but in a moment he had seized her again and was holding her firmly. Two of his men had followed him and drew near.

"Bring the sled here and the ropes," said he, angrily.

"But you will not bind me?" cried Marcelle, in terror.

"I shall, indeed, and to the sled, too, and drag you along like a dead pig."

Marcelle put her head in her hands and wept. Then the thought of captivity roused her to madness.

"You will not dare," she cried, defiantly, and for a moment she lost all fear. But the approach of the men with the sled, the evident determination of her captor to carry out his threat, and her own helplessness, caused her heart to sink within her.

"Oh, let me go," she pleaded. "I will not trouble you any more. You have had a mother and perhaps a sister. Think of them and—"

"I mean you no harm, Marcelle," said Latour, gently. "Far from it. I would slay the man who would offer violence to you, but since I have said before my men that you must visit my château with me first, after which I will conduct you to the city—"

"That cannot matter to so great a gentleman," said Marcelle, tearfully. "I will speak well of you to the men."

"Marcelle, you must go with me and at once," said Latour, angrily, as he gave an apprehensive glance along the road leading to the city.

The men advanced to bind her, but she turned and went with them unresistingly. They walked beside her, waiting for further orders. Marcelle and her captors had advanced in this way some little distance to the edge of the wood when a man bounded suddenly from a clump of firs down to the road in front of them.

"Halt!" he cried. "Why is the woman weeping?"

"Stand aside, you scoundrel," cried Latour, in a passion.

"The man who killed the squaw!" exclaimed the stranger, with supreme insolence.

"Fire!" cried Latour, in a sudden frenzy of rage.

Two of the men only, having been ready for the word, fired; the others looked hastily to their flints. But the stranger's companions had leaped down at the word "fire" and in a moment had seized Latour's escort and held them prisoners.

Marcelle's feelings were now divided between grief and fear. She stood waiting for the stranger to speak. Latour swore and threatened, but it was of no avail.

With consummate coolness the outlaw walked up to Marcelle, and taking off his toque, leaned forward, looking at her neckdress closely.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the lake of the Hurons," said Marcelle, wonderingly.

"Humph! Do you know Black John?"

"My father!" exclaimed Marcelle. "What do you know of him?"

"Of the coureurs-de-bois. You are a prisoner?" he asked again, glancing quietly at Latour.

"I am," said Marcelle; "but what would you do?"

"Liberate you," said he; "I am a coureur-de-bois." At these words Marcelle rushed forward and threw herself, half-fainting, at his feet.

"You are too good!" she cried; "it is the Blessed Virgin," and she began to recite hurriedly a prayer.

Meanwhile the chief of the coureurs, whom we recognize as Jean, gave orders that Latour and his men should turn towards the city.

"Monsieur Latour will go, too," said Jean, mockingly, as the former showed a disinclination to start.

Marcelle walked by the side of her rescuer. "You will take me to the convent, monsieur, I beg."

"Wherever you wish," said the coureur, gallantly; "you are the daughter of one of us, and once, long ago, Black John saved my life."

"And now you have saved mine, monsieur," said Marcelle, gratefully.

"I think his cabin was near the Hurons' lake."

"Yes," said Marcelle; "in the woods to the left of the trail."

"But that was, let me see, twenty years ago. You are not so old as that?"

"Yes, I am, monsieur—but not older," said Marcelle, smilingly, for she was beginning to gain courage and self-possession.

"I thought so," said the coureur, in a matter-of-fact way. "The Iroquois were raiding and the King's officers were not on the trail of traders. Those were harder times than now by a good deal. Why, I would have been strung up to a post then if I had walked near the city. But now I go free. Frontenac is afraid of the English. They all trade, too. The King pays for nothing. The laws against us are no good. It used to be that no man could go to the woods for more than a day. Now they go when they please. But it is better. It is better to be free. What were these devils doing?"

Marcelle was startled by the abruptness of the question.

"Monsieur Latour wished me to visit his big house yonder before going to the convent. I did not wish to do it, and he insisted."

"You did well," said Jean, emphatically. "Latour is a bad man. He killed a squaw of the Abenaquis for nothing at all. They will kill him now. He deserves it. He is a bad man. But it is all right now. I will see you safe into the convent."

Marcelle again expressed her gratitude.

"But what of my father and the cabin?" she asked.

"Your mother—"

"My mother is dead," said Marcelle, sadly.

"Dead! what a pity! She was the finest woman of the Hurons—tall; taller than you.

"Did you know Metawa?" asked Marcelle.

"Who is he?"

"The Huron," said Marcelle, disappointedly.

Jean looked at her quizzically, but her eyes were in the distance.

"But your story, monsieur? You forgot what you were going to say," said Marcelle.

"One wild night," resumed the coureur, "the wolves were after me, but I ran a long way when I heard them. I was tired, and just as I was giving up I heard the crunch, crunch of snowshoes on the hard snow. I called out as loud as ever I could, but there was no response. Then I heard the snowshoes coming nearer. It was Black John. He took me to his cabin near by. I would have been eaten by the wolves but for him. My strength was gone and it was very cold. Your mother rubbed my foot. It was nearly frozen. She gave me soup, and I sat by the fire. But that was twenty years ago. I think there was a little baby. I did not see it, but I heard it cry."

"Yes," said Marcelle; "it was in a little room at the side. That was I."

"Yes, yes; that must have been you. You are here now. The convent is that big place there. Then I will turn the traitors off and let them go into the town."

The party halted before the great door of the Ursuline Convent. Jean made a sign to Marcelle and she went forward and knocked. The door opened slowly, but was closed instantly and bolted when the nun saw the character of the visitors. Then Jean went forward and struck the door sharply with the hilt of his hunting knife. The door opened again, but only on the half-chain. Marcelle began to speak and then the sister called her to come close. Presently the door swung wide open and Marcelle entered.

"Adieu, monsieur!" said Marcelle, turning about and waving her hand to the coureur. "I shall always pray for you. Adieu, adieu!"

The coureur doffed his toque and bowed, and as the door closed he turned away. He had paid a debt and was satisfied.

"Marche, donc!" cried the coureur, and as the words died on his lips the men and their prisoners resumed their march and disappeared down the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WILL you be good enough to inform Mother de l'Incarnation that Major La Montagne and Captain St. Just present their compliments and would respectfully await her pleasure."

This stilted pronouncement of an ordinary salutation, delivered through the crack of the half-opened door of the Ursuline Convent, was sufficiently ridiculous to cause Major La Montagne to smile.

"What is all this fuss about, St. Just? You are carrying your diplomacy to ridiculous lengths surely when you send a message thus, just as if we were outside the drawbridge of a great castle."

"That is just what it is, my dear fellow. This is a great castle and this big door the portcullis," repeated St. Just.

"Nonsense!" said La Montagne. "Do you intend also to kiss the Mother Superior's hand?"

"I do not," replied St. Just, hotly, "but if you see nothing in all this after our conversation and agreement, perhaps we had better retire."

"In good order, eh? No, we shall not retire without having met the enemy."

"The Mother Superior is ill at present, but Sister St. Aubert will see you if you so desire. She is the superintendent of the convent," said the nun, returning.

"Certainly," said St. Just; "we shall see Sister St. Aubert."

They entered the convent and were shown into a small reception-room.

The nun hurried away.

"When we see Sister St. Aubert, what do you propose to say?" inquired La Montagne.

"What the exigencies of the moment may require in behalf of His Excellency," said St. Just.

"Ah!" exclaimed La Montagne, twiddling his thumbs and looking at the pictures of the saints and martyrs adorning the walls.

Sister St. Aubert entered the room and looked warily about in the half-light.

St. Just and La Montagne promptly arose and remained standing, the former bowing deeply, till the good sister invited them to be reseated.

"I suppose, Sister St. Aubert," began St. Just, "that you are reasonably desirous of knowing to what you are indebted for this visit."

"Yes, monsieur," replied Sister St. Aubert, pleasantly.

"This, my companion, is Major La Montagne of His Excellency's Guard, and I am Captain St. Just of the same corps."

Having satisfied himself that this was not an ill beginning, he continued:

"You know His Excellency is most desirous of putting down the disorders which have lately grown up in the woods and are beginning to manifest themselves in the city. We understand that a young

woman now in your care has experienced treatment which has not escaped the attention of His Excellency's officers."

"Unfortunately what you state is true," replied Sister St. Aubert, earnestly.

"Do you know the facts?" asked St. Just.

"Yes. The young woman came to the door of the convent in charge of a band of coureurs-de-bois with some other prisoners," replied Sister St. Aubert.

"You took her in?"

"Yes. She had been rescued from her conductors."

"Do you know the name of her conductors?"

"We do," said Sister St. Aubert, cautiously, "but just now would prefer to say nothing. The girl is safe."

"Quite so," continued St. Just, a little baffled, but with a becoming smile. Then, after a pause, "You know, if we could learn the names of the offenders His Excellency could punish them."

"We would prefer to accuse no one at present," said Sister St. Aubert.

"Could we see the girl?" asked St. Just, innocently.

Sister St. Aubert thought for a moment, when, to his delight, she agreed and left the room.

"Mon dieu! you are a diplomatist surely if we see the girl," said La Montagne.

St. Just drummed his fingers upon the frame of the chair and looked wise.

A nun entered with two more candles and placed them upon the table.

"That is better," said La Montagne; "now we shall be able to see her when she does come."

Marcelle was startled when Sister St. Aubert brought up the visitors' request, but she placed herself altogether at the sister's discretion. A little attention to dress followed and then they went down.

This time both St. Just and La Montagne bowed very profoundly, and the latter showed a disposition to assume the position his rank entitled him to, notwithstanding their agreement.

"A most terrible outrage has been perpetrated against the peace and dignity of His Majesty the King and of His Excellency the Count de Frontenac," said La Montagne, addressing Marcelle.

"There has, indeed," put in St. Just, "and we have come to learn, at the lady's will and pleasure, some particulars of it that we may proceed before His Excellency and his council to accuse the proper party."

Marcelle was silent, but at a whispered word from Sister St. Aubert she began:

"Monsieur Latour came to the cabin of my father, who is known as Black John, the coureur-de-bois. He persuaded me to come to Quebec and told me I should be received at the court of His Excellency—"

"And so you shall," said St. Just, exultingly. "Pray proceed, in the King's name."

"Then I made ready and with his escort accompanied him, but when we came to the city he wished to turn off and go to his own house that lies far out there to the westward."

"A most villainous proceeding," said St. Just solemnly. "We are indebted to you for the information. You were rescued by a coureur-de-bois, we understand."

"Yes; but for him and his men I should not have reached the convent so soon," replied Marcelle.

"It is well to find these rangers of the wilderness as ready to do a good deed as they are able to do a bad one," continued St. Just. "We shall not detain you at the present longer. Pray convey to the Mother Superior, Sister St. Aubert, the profound sense of the obligation we are under. His Excellency, I am sure, will notify you at my request of his pleasure that you should appear at the Château."

"I shall look to that," said La Montagne, authoritatively. Both men bowed again and took their departure.

"Pardieu! La Montagne, but that girl will make a sensation at court," said St. Just, when they were clear of the building. "I have never seen such eyes and such dazzling skin. It accounts for Latour's madness."

"Do you think His Excellency will be pleased to hear of your promises?" asked La Montagne, dubiously.

"Mon dieu! Yes. She will be the sensation of the hour. She will be under His Excellency's protection instead of the Bishop's. Is not that of some importance?"

"You mean the sensation?"

"Yes. It is all sensation, and it will show the King how little Saint-Vallier is doing for the peace of the country while we are working night and day. If the Bishop should take the matter up he could make trouble for His Excellency. Latour was in His Excellency's favor, at any rate a twelvemonth ago. It would be easy to make out a case. The noblesse in

the especial favor of His Excellency resorting to violence and rapine would cut a sorry figure if Monseigneur took up the matter of the country's unrest and internal disturbances. There would be another recall, or I am mistaken. It is a narrow escape and we must look to it."

La Montagne eyed his companion closely during this discourse.

"What do you now propose to do?" he asked.

"I propose to go to His Excellency and lay the whole affair before him. He will see what you do not," replied St. Just.

"And the procurator?"

"Look here, my dear comrade. These procurators and deputies are more interested in keeping their positions than in informing His Excellency of the true state of affairs. I shall see His Excellency himself."

"And I had better go with you," suggested La Montagne.

"Decidedly. Officers of the Guard should know all about these things and work together for each other's good, or else how shall we ever get promotion? Duroc is in charge of the artillery of the seventh corps in La Vendée. He would still be kicking his heels in this barbaric country and running the risk of losing his scalp at every turn had he not been diplomatic."

"I forget. What did he do?"

"What did he do? Mon dieu! hear him!" exclaimed St. Just, impatiently. "Did he not find the brandy in the Island of Orleans? Did he not pick

up Madame Picquart's headgear when it was about to be carried into the St. Lawrence by the wind? Did he not cry 'Fire!' in time to save the château?"

"No, he did not," said La Montagne, emphatically. "The château was burned."

"Yes, yes; I know that. But he called 'Fire!' in time to save it if there had been soldiers enough sober to carry water. It was not his fault."

"Is this the sort of stuff you wish to deal in when the question of the day is whether France or England shall own a continent?" inquired La Montagne, sarcastically.

"My dear comrade, such questions as those are for the big people of France and England and for His Excellency. They are not for us. Some day when we get to be big people we will speak of those. In the meantime it is necessary to grow big."

"And this is what you call growing big. Pah!" said La Montagne, disgustedly.

"Very well. If you will not, you will not. I can do nothing with you. I will go myself," said St. Just.

"Then I shall leave it all to you, but come at once and tell me how it came off when you have done."

"That I shall; we are brothers," said St. Just.

The lights of the fort were shining brightly across the snow when the two officers reached their quarters. From the deep recesses of the windows their shafts of light shot out into the night, enabling one to see the sentries as they paced smartly to and fro in order to keep warm. Voices within were raised in discussion. The young subalterns, but lately arrived from

France by the King's appointment, were boasting of what they were going to do.

"Ah! he will kill an Iroquois chief, will he?" said La Montagne, as he overheard the boast. "Perhaps he will change his mind about that."

St. Just passed on in and went to his own room. His mind was on fire with the possibilities that were seemingly within easy reach. He resolved to dress himself appropriately and visit His Excellency without delay. Ringing the bell, he directed his servant to prepare his wig forthwith. It was no small affair, this wig of visitation and ceremony, and gave its wearer, at least in his own eyes, a certain imposing air that carried weight. His coat of maroon velvet, rolled and open at the neck, with fluted skirt and ruffled sleeves, rested neatly upon his broad, square shoulders, and yet did not draw close enough to hide the rich embroidery of the waistcoat. His boots, also, of the latest style from Paris, rose a little more than ankle high and fell back at the top in folds held in their place by bands of silken string. His plumed hat did not ill become him, and with his sword and walking-stick, both of which were carried by every well-ordered gentleman of the day, and gloves as well, he was no discredit to the circle of diplomacy which he had resolved to enter. It was yet an hour to tea-time and a favorable moment to interview His Excellency in secret. Stepping into the square once more upon his solitary mission, he pulled his cloak about him to protect him from the snow which the searching east wind every now and then caught up and whirled suddenly about.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Château St. Louis, the official residence of the Governor of New France, was built partly of wood and partly of stone, and what it lacked in design it made up in the strength and massiveness of its construction. It was a large building, also, and held, besides the Governor and his wife, the members of his family and suite. Of guests, too, there was usually a large number, consisting mainly of members of the Royal Court spending a holiday amidst the romantic and strange scenes of the most extensive and farthest distant province of the French King, and feeling anew and with greater intensity the enthusiasm of a youth jaded by the stiffness and insipidity of the Court of Versailles. The diplomatic corps dwelt there also, whose business, but by no means their pleasure, it was to checkmate the combined attempts of English and Iroquois upon the Acadian and Canadian provinces without resorting to actual war, which threatened, by its constant recurrence, to turn the profit of trade into a source of poverty and weakness. Fighting for a kingdom of continental range as they were, every new success of the English of Boston or of the French of Canada was received at the English Court or at that of France with corresponding joy or disappointment. Reputations were made, or more often lost, in

this diplomatic contest; hence it was that men of prominence and distinction graced the court of Frontenac much beyond the importance of the province or of its apparent requirements. The line of territorial demarcation might apparently have been made more secure between the French and English by the building of stronger and more numerous forts along that line; but the building of forts upon the Canadian frontier would really have had a counter-effect, since whilst it might keep off the Iroquois it would furnish also a secure base of attack upon them for the Indian allies of the French, who were only too anxious to begin hostilities if with a prospect of success. This would have effectually diminished the product of the Canadian fur-trade, without which forts and allies alike would have been worse than useless. Diplomacy, therefore, took the place of forts and lines of defence. At the Château lived also at all times a certain number of the Canadian noblesse, who by right of blazonry on the one hand, and by reason of their relationship to the people of the colony and to the turbulent and haughty coureurs-de-bois on the other, were entitled to and received the distinction. The noblesse formed, indeed, the connecting link between the governor and the governed, without which it would have been, especially in the case of the coureurs-de-bois, impossible to proceed. Then, too, the noblesse were a source of strength by reason of their knowledge of the country; and although their obligations of holding of the Crown were discharged by the ceremony of faith and homage, their military and civil services

were of much greater value. Likewise they served to perpetuate the monarchical institutions of Old France, a most important service, even if on all ordinary occasions their gain was greater than their giving. Beyond the priests and confessors of the household, the clergy lived in their own establishments. To these permanent residents with the royal governor may be added the occasional explorers and adventurers of rank and distinction, who were accustomed to spend a few days at the Château both on arriving from France and on returning from the interior of the wilderness.

When St. Just was ushered into the presence of His Excellency he was met by a reserve which, though to a certain extent accustomed to, he now found chilling in the extreme.

Frontenac stood with his back to the fire and never so much as deigned to ask the reason of the visit.

As it was make or mar, and assuredly would be the latter if he did not pluck up courage and give utterance to his thoughts, St. Just began :

" May it please your Excellency, the daughter of a coureur-de-bois has been immured in the Ursuline Convent."

" By whose order ?" asked Frontenac, gruffly.

" She was brought in by MonsieurLatour, who promised that she should see Your Excellency. He has just returned with his party of voyageurs," continued St. Just.

" What does this mean ? Is it some further villainy of the—" Here Frontenac stopped.

St. Just continued : " Your Excellency, this woman

is a daughter of the famous Black John, who is said to have a strain of nobility in his blood. Latour was upon one of his exploring expeditions when he came to the cabin of Black John. It seems he was fascinated by the beauty of his daughter, for so it must have been, and he induced her to come to Quebec under the protection of Your Excellency."

"Is she of good report?" asked Frontenac.

"For aught I know, and looks it. She spurned Latour and reached the convent of the Ursulines, where she now is.

"I am interested," said Frontenac, directing his visitor to a chair.

St. Just was delighted and watched the countenance of Frontenac eagerly.

"She was rescued, Your Excellency, by the coureurs-de-bois," said St. Just.

"And placed in the convent?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, but that was where she had herself wished to go."

Frontenac was now decidedly interested as the details of a possible conspiracy against the civil power presented themselves to his view.

"But I thought you said just now that Latour had induced her to accompany him since she was to be received at court?"

"It was thus, Your Excellency."

"Then why is it that she seeks the convent, not, as you have said, was immured there?"

"Your Excellency knows that the convent is always the place of refuge of the modest and defenceless."

"You are an officer of my guard?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"And expect promotion?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Then see to it that she leaves the convent and comes to the Château. Make what promise you like. Within certain limits I give you a free hand."

Frontenac moved towards the door. St. Just bowed deeply and retired.

"Ha! What will that beast La Montagne now say?"

The sound of a distant bell warned him to be quick if he would reach the convent before closing.

Once more he stood before the massive door and heard it creak in the opening.

"What do you wish?" asked the nun, peering out.

"I come, most sainted sister, from His Excellency, with a message for the ranger's daughter."

Upon hearing such important news the nun hurried away. St. Just awaited patiently her return.

At length Marcelle re-appeared, but, as before, in company with Sister St. Aubert.

St. Just, though unable to distinguish the identity of Marcelle except by her voice, did not omit to make one of his courtly and insinuating bows. His plumed hat he held in his hand, though at the imminent risk of catching cold.

"I am from His Excellency the Count de Frontenac and Governor of New France and of such other possessions as lie under the dominion of His Majesty," he said, solemnly. "His Excellency has directed me to say, that having heard that one Monsieur Latour has mistreated you and misdirected you regarding his

intentions, to the annoyance and discomfort of His Excellency, that therefore he requests you to enter the precincts of the Château, there to abide under the immediate protection of Her Excellency and himself until such time as, having inquired into the case in hand, he shall be enabled to do justice and award punishment. Thereupon His Excellency will send you back to this sacred abode under escort befitting the dignity of your station and of His Excellency whose guest you are."

Marcelle was nonplussed by this long and grandiloquent harangue, yet since it came from His Excellency she was duly impressed by it.

"Will monsieur wait?" asked Sister St. Aubert.

"I am at your service," said St. Just.

It being long past the hour of twilight, and against the rules of the convent that visitors should be admitted within the portal at such a time, St. Just continued to wait without upon the steps, kicking his heels and stamping his feet to keep them warm. This time there was a longer interval than before between the appearance and re-appearance of the portress, but at last the door reopened.

"The Mother Superior directs me to convey to His Excellency her profound obligations for the honor of his message and of your visit, monsieur, but it is impossible that the demoiselle should leave the convent to-night," she said.

"Shall I come in the morning?" asked St. Just.

"We will send His Excellency word," said the nun, who then abruptly closed the door.

"Pardieu, this is growing complicated," thought St. Just, as he wheeled into the street. "We shall see if in the morning Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier will consent to give up his prize."

Pondering deeply upon this problem, he had not gone many steps when the idea of a probable and valuable ally occurred to him. To the house of Madame Bernard-Pallu he hied without delay. Madame Bernard-Pallu du Crespigny—such being her full title—was a lady of influence not only at court, but wherever else she chose to exercise it. Her shrewdness was such that she had remained a good friend both of the Governor and of the Bishop throughout a misunderstanding which had done more even than the Iroquois and the English together to unsettle Canadian affairs and to disturb the King.

St. Just, however, was not to be trifled with or imposed upon by protestations of friendship unless the usual proofs were given and received. This he showed plainly to Madame Bernard-Pallu in the very first stage of the interview. Failing in these, she was perplexed, but revolving in her mind the penalties of a refusal of the request, which, after all, was merely that she should see Marcelle and should picture to her in glowing terms the pomps and pleasures of the court, thereupon leaving the leaven to work of itself, she was fain to consent, relying upon her ability to conceal from the Mother Superior the true motive of her visit.

"But who is this Marcelle? Some wildcat of the woods, I suppose?" said Madame Bernard-Pallu.

"Nay," said St. Just, craftily, "she is lovelier than Elise Béranger."

Now Élise Béranger was the daughter of Madame Bernard-Pallu's rival at court. Though childless herself, she was unable to repress her envy when Madame Béranger held the attention of their Excellencies by means of the beauty and amiability of her daughter Élise.

"You say she is lovely. Do you mean really beautiful?" asked Madame Pallu.

"Under favor she surpasses in beauty all the young ladies of Quebec," said St. Just, solemnly.

Madame Bernard-Pallu meditated. It was a serious step.

"I will see this girl and bring her to my house in the morning," she said, finally.

"No, madame; it is not that which I want. I am desirous of having the authorities of the convent consent to Marcelle's going to the Château, and what is even more important—that Marcelle should wish to go, and thereby of her own accord put herself under the immediate protection of His Excellency."

"Yes; I see your meaning. I shall do what I can. But what has become of Latour?"

"I do not know," said St. Just, "further than that he protests against insinuations and asserts that he has been misjudged."

"What does His Excellency say?"

"Oh! he intends to punish him—that is, I suppose, if Marcelle does not make it difficult by remaining under the protection of the Bishop."

"Does His Lordship know that this girl is under his protection?"

"I do not think so. It is so recent that he can scarcely have heard, but it is certain that he will have heard before long."

"Yes, of course; since you have made your request in His Excellency's name," observed Madame Bernard-Pallu. "What do you think will come of it?"

"That depends upon two things," said St. Just.

"What?"

"Upon whether Marcelle wishes to shine amid the splendors of the vice-regal court, or prefers to remain hidden behind the thick walls of a convent."

"To become a nun?"

"Yes; that is it."

"But suppose that the Bishop makes it a matter of religion and of conscience?" asked Madame Bernard-Pallu.

"Then he will be prepared to go any lengths, and it will re-open the whole quarrel. This must be prevented at all costs. Marcelle will never dare to disobey the order of the Bishop. Of that we may be certain. But then she could leave the convent before she receives His Lordship's order."

"But what of the Mother Superior?" asked Madame Bernard-Pallu.

"As I have said, that depends upon you," replied St. Just.

"Very well. I go to mass to-morrow morning and will stop at the convent on the way."

"I shall rely, then, upon your wisdom," said St. ust, rising.

"You may."

St. John returned to the barracks. La Montagne was asleep in his chair, but awoke on St. Just's entrance.

"It is you, St. Just, eh?" said he, with a yawn. "What have you done?"

"I have succeeded—"

"Say 'we,' please. I have helped to do the unravel—"

"But there is no unravelling. It is in a most unfort—"

"Then I will have nothing to do with it," cried La Montagne, starting up, being deceived by the other's expression of countenance.

CHAPTER X.

MARCELLE had no desire to be a nun. By nature of a good and sweet disposition, inclined to religious worship and of a deep and abiding faith in the Blessed Virgin, she was yet neither sufficiently ascetic to wish to seek the life of a recluse, nor had she cause to be sufficiently remorseful to require it. The attentions of the good sisters she regarded with gratitude, and their piety with admiration. But to continue as an inmate of the convent, except from such a necessity as lately befell her, was neither her wish nor intention. The news, therefore, that His Excellency the Count de Frontenac and Her Excellency his wife were desirous of having her pay them a visit at the Château was received by her with secret rapture. It was plain to her, however, that the sisters were not of a similar opinion, and that they regarded her stay with them as likely to be indefinitely prolonged into adoption into the sisterhood. That there was some misunderstanding between the clergy and His Excellency she surmised, but being ignorant of politics and of diplomatic disputes, she failed to grasp its significance or the importance of the part she herself might play with respect to it.

She had risen in the gloom of a dark winter's morning and was preparing to accompany the sisters

to the convent chapel, when a tap at her bed-room door startled her. To the request to enter a lady in furs responded by coming in and closing the door behind her. She removed her neckwrap and disclosed to the astonished Marcelle the smiling countenance of a woman of refinement of about middle age.

"You are Marcelle? Then you will pardon me. I have heard of you," Madame Pallu said, cheerily, "and of the treachery of Latour. I am Madame Bernard-Pallu, widow of Monsieur Bernard-Pallu, and one of the ladies-in-waiting of Her Excellency."

"From Monsieur St. Just?" asked Marcelle, regaining her composure.

"Yes; from Captain St. Just," replied Madame Bernard-Pallu. "You are to come with me if you will."

"What? At so early an hour? Then the Mother Superior has sent word to His Excellency? It is so kind. But it will be necessary to see at least Sister St. Aubert before leaving?"

"Yes; the sisters are so good and kind," assented Madame Bernard-Pallu, reassuringly.

"I must hurry, then, or they may be in chapel."

Marcelle made haste to get ready.

"As you please," said Madame Bernard-Pallu, whose quiet manner calmed Marcelle's excitement.

They descended into the hall in search of the sisters. The first one to appear was Sister St. Aubert. Madame Pallu kissed her tenderly.

"I have come to chaperone Marcelle for Her Excellency," said Madame Pallu, announcing her object with innocent candour.

"To the Château?" asked Sister St. Aubert, in trepidation.

"Yes; for Her Excellency."

"For Her Excellency?" echoed Sister St. Aubert.

"Why, Captain St. Just arranged it, did he not?" said Madame Pallu, apologetically, for she had no idea of flying in the face of the Church.

"It may be, it may be. I will see the Mother. I have no doubt it is quite so, but I must obey orders. You are to escort her?"

"Yes."

Sister St. Aubert went in search of the Mother Superior, but returned without having seen her.

"The Mother Superior is at mass," she said.

"Oh," exclaimed Madame Pallu, as if her plans were greatly to suffer through this delay, "I am afraid I cannot stay, then. His Excellency awaits me with Marcelle. Then I shall inform His Excellency that it will be necessary—but Captain St. Just must have been mistaken."

"He had arranged it, then?" asked Sister St. Aubert, doubtfully.

"Yes, yes. He said all was arranged."

Here was an unpleasant situation. It would not be good policy to offend His Excellency.

"Then perhaps Marcelle might go if there is nothing to prevent her return when the Mother wishes."

"Nothing, dear Sister St. Aubert. It is only a visit, I assure you. It is a mere matter of formality."

"Very well. What say you, Marcelle?"

"I will go," said Marcelle, who was afraid the chance might not occur again, "but I will return immediately."

She returned to her room, but re-appeared without delay. Madame Pallu led the way. They descended into the street, where a richly-furnished sleigh was drawn up in waiting.

It was a sumptuous though somewhat early introduction to the splendours of palace life, but it served to set at ease Marcelle's mind as to the manner of her taking leave and the position and credentials of Madame Pallu herself.

Madame Bernard-Pallu could scarcely repress her excitement at the success of her adventure.

"I will send word to the Mother that you were sent for and that you had no opportunity to bid her adieu," she said, turning to Marcelle when they had set out.

"But I can return? It will not be so far, will it?" said Marcelle.

"True, it will not be so far, but then, you know, at present there is no great friendship between the Bishop and His Excellency."

Marcelle's heart sank within her.

"Then I must return to the convent at once. I will be on the side of the Church," she said.

Such unexpected piety in a daughter of a coureur-de-bois somewhat surprised Madame Bernard-Pallu, but she soon recovered her lost ground.

"You are quite mistaken," she said, reassuringly, if you think the Bishop represents the Church, Pope or

clergy. The clergy think the Bishop is a madman. It will be time enough to be afraid when the Cardinal has spoken.

"And has he not spoken?" asked Marcelle, relieved.

"Not except to admonish the Bishop. But let us say no more about it. Once having seen His Excellency you can do as you please. We women must be discreet."

The morning sun, now beginning to appear from behind the Laurentian mountains, suddenly shed a flood of light over the city which was springing, as it were, in a moment into the activities of daily life. The sounds of sleigh-bells and of runners creaking in the snow were heard in every direction. Men and women, clad in the familiar toque, cloth or skin coat and moccasins of the common people of the period, were moving about, either going to or returning from one of the numerous churches, or making ready for an early start into the woods.

As Madame Bernard-Pallu's horses turned the corner of the street leading to the Château St. Louis, a sleigh was being driven away from the door of that edifice, while a lady and gentleman ascended the steps and disappeared into the building between two attendants who stood at the entrance.

"His Excellency," exclaimed madame Bernard-Pallu, excitedly. "We are just in time."

At a word from Madame Bernard-Pallu the coachman whipped up his horses and drew up hurriedly before the Château.

As Marcelle and her conductress passed into the

entrance-hall servants were relieving their Excellencies of their wraps.

"Ah! Madame Bernard-Pallu!" exclaimed Frontenac. As he spoke his eye fell upon Marcelle.

"The daughter of the coureur-de-bois?" he asked, stepping forward to take her hands in his.

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, timidly.

"Then, believe me, we must thank God for your rescue from the traitor Latour, although he may have meant no ill, and welcome you to our midst, where you shall stay and be cared for as one of us."

The warmth of his welcome was enhanced rather than repeated by his spouse, who straightway conducted Marcelle to her future quarters.

Frontenac tarried in the hall below and continued speaking with Madame Bernard-Pallu.

"And you say that you did not see the sisters?" he asked.

"With but one exception, no, Your Excellency. They had gone to the chapel."

"And do you think that wise?"

"Captain St. Just impressed me with the extreme necessity of getting her away at once from the control of the Bishop, lest His Lordship should make use of Latour's misconduct in his report to the Cardinal."

"I care not," said Frontenac, haughtily, "what monseigneur may do, but I will send a messenger to apprise the nuns of what has been done and to pay for her lodging. Is it with Marcelle's consent?"

"Perfectly," said Madame Bernard-Pallu, "Marcelle had no wish to remain. Of course, I told her that

she was to come to the Château by Your Excellency's invitation and command."

"You had much better have left the latter word unspoken," said Frontenac. "Where is St. Just?"

"I do not know," replied Madame Bernard-Pallu, abashed. "Is it Your Excellency's wish that he convey the message to the Mother Superior?"

"It is," he replied, briefly.

"I would take it myself, and at once, if your Excellency will permit. My sleigh is at the door."

"With pleasure. I shall esteem it a favor. You know what I wish to have said?"

"Perfectly."

Frontenac himself conducted Madame Bernard-Pallu to her sleigh.

Although this distinction was the more gratifying since it would be noised abroad before breakfast that something important must be in the wind when Madame Bernard-Pallu and His Excellency were in conversation at dawn, it did not allay the fear of Madame Bernard-Pallu that she was likely to be made one of the storm-centres of the dispute between His Excellency and the Bishop if the clergy should penetrate Frontenac's design of using Marcelle as a shield against the shafts of criticism and ridicule dispatched so frequently by the Bishop and his allies against himself, the laxity of his administration, and the licence of his Court.

It gave cause for meditation, but before her equipage had reached the convent she had reached a

decision. She would stand by His Excellency, upon whom her pension and position alike depended, so long as it was possible.

"I am bidden by His Excellency the Count de Frontenac, my dear Mother, to inform you that Marcelle Courtebois, so hospitably received and so charitably dealt with by you, has accepted the invitation of His Excellency, your very dear friend and well-wisher, for a sojourn at the Château. He commands me, in addition, to pay you all that you may require for the support, board and lodging of one who, according to all usages in the case, is a ward of the King, and therefore not at the charge and expense of any-one save His Excellency and the Sovereign Council."

"Do you mean that Marcelle has already left this convent?" asked the Mother, in a surprised and distressed tone.

"I do," said Madame Bernard-Pallu.

"Was it by her own wish?"

"It was."

"I have nothing more to say," said the Mother Superior, coldly.

"But you have terms, dear Mother. What shall His Excellency pay?"

"That I cannot say. She was in our charge, but not placed there except by the hand of God. I will report to His Lordship."

Madame Bernard-Pallu turned pale. It was the contingency of all others to be averted.

"That is true, dear Mother. Of that even His

Excellency is aware, and none more—but that Marcelle should wish to leave the convent and dwell at the Château is her own doing, and in no sense his."

"But the invitation."

"True, she was invited—and Captain St. Just, who is perhaps a little hasty and inconsiderate, undertook to carry out His Excellency's commands. He may have done so realizing that for His Excellency to leave a ward of the King at the expense of our Church would be as unworthy of the Council as it would be worthy of our Church—where the Church did not demand it."

The countenance of the Mother Superior underwent a distinct change of expression at these loyal and submissive words.

"Did His Excellency command you to bring this message?"

"He did."

"I shall then leave it till the Abbé returns from Montreal," said the Superior.

Madame Bernard-Pallu could not repress a sigh of relief. The crisis had been averted. It was now necessary to see that His Excellency should know whom to thank.

That afternoon St. Just came to interview Madame Bernard-Pallu. He was anxious and, as usual, excited.

"How have you succeeded?" he cried, even without waiting for the usual formality of a greeting.

Madame Bernard-Pallu shook her head ominously.

"I am afraid there will come trouble out of this.

I am sorry that my wish to oblige you has led me into a quarrel with the Mother Superior."

"Oh! dear."

"Yes, and with the Abbé."

"Oh! dear. Oh! dear."

"Yes, and with Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier."

The mention of the Bishop's name chilled the very blood in St. Just's heart.

"What do you think?" he asked, huskily.

"There will be another interdict."

"Surely not."

"Yes, and we shall be punished."

"By whom?"

"By the Bishop."

"For what you have done?"

"I? I have done nothing."

"It will be necessary for you to tell that to Father Delaurier or to His Excellency," said St. Just, quietly.

"What has the father to do with it?" asked Madame Bernard-Pallu, giving a deep sigh and wiping an imaginary tear from her eye.

St. Just was nervous. "Where is Marcelle?" he asked.

"At the Château."

"Then you really have succeeded?"

"Have I not told you?" she replied, crushingly.

"You are sad," he remarked, after a pause.

"You will be so, too," she said, threateningly.

"What had I better do?"

"Confess to Father Delaurier."

"But it is you, not I."

"Very well; confess that. I can say no more. Adieu!"

St. Just arose and departed in a quandary of quandaries. How La Montagne would laugh, and yet—it was a serious matter. He was in this perplexed condition of mind, walking slowly towards the barracks, when a long shrill bugle-blast roused him from his reverie. He stopped to listen when another and then another coming from different quarters of the fortifications warned him that something unusual was afoot and caused him to hasten into a run.

CHAPTER XI.

In all the vast region of French and English America there was nothing so to be dreaded in the seventeenth century as the Iroquois. A friendly confederacy composed of five nations—Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas—they yet developed a rivalry in war that excelled in horror the worst of the recorded annals of human treachery and crime. They regarded it as a prime necessity that all obstacles in their path of conquest and dominion should be thoroughly removed. Shrewd and acute far beyond the average of men, they foresaw the ultimate acquirement of their country by the whites and the consequent removal or destruction of their race if every means in their power were not adopted for withstanding it. From the whites, therefore, they continued to obtain at every opportunity, either in trade or as bribes in time of need, arms and ammunition, which, with the addition of their tomahawks, rendered them formidable opponents indeed. In the great struggle between the French and the English they had been sought and won as allies by the English. This was not due to any fancy that they loved the English more, but simply that they loved the French less. Champlain, a hundred years before, had joined with the northern Algonquin tribes against them, and to

this diplomatic mistake was ultimately due the loss of New France to Old France, since from the date of its announcement and the subsequent invasion of the Iroquois territory by the Algonquins and their French allies, the Iroquois never ceased to retaliate in the most barbarous and effective manner. Neither white man nor red, nor women nor children, were ever free from the dread of their attack. When peace had been proclaimed, that was the time they made war on pretexts too numerous to consider. On the other hand, when war had been declared it was pursued with a vigor and destructiveness that left ruin and heart-burnings everywhere in its train. As a consequence the development of trade and agriculture in New France was retarded and the colony kept in infancy when it should have grown into manhood along with the colonies of New England. When at a later date England succeeded, after a long series of fruitless attacks, in wresting New France from the mother country, it was because the combined and long-continued attacks of the English and Iroquois had held the population of New France in check and thus had balked the designs of every statesman from Cardinal Richelieu to Colbert.

To demonstrate the truth of this conclusion it is only necessary to affirm that had the Iroquois allied themselves with France, the English and Dutch would have been driven from Boston, New York and Albany into the sea. As it was, the explorers, adventurers and agents of the French King succeeded before the close of the French *régime* in erecting forts as far west as

the Ohio, encircling in the embrace of an arm extending from Quebec to that river the northern and western limits of the country of their enemies. But the balance of power remaining with their Iroquois foes proved for the French too strong an obstacle to further advance, and when, little by little, they and their northern allies were driven back again beyond the great lakes, the evening of a long day had begun to draw in and the tragic ending of as mighty a struggle as ever took place between rival races for territorial supremacy was already merely a matter of time.

The system of fortifications at Quebec was supposed to be complete enough to hold off any attack by land or water. Assuredly an attack by water was hardly to be reckoned upon, since the precipitous promontory upon which Quebec was built was bulwark enough to defy an assault, with, of course, the assistance of a few defenders properly disposed. It was not so with the landward side, however, where, apart from the approach of the forest to within a short distance of the city walls, serving as a cover to an enemy, there was nothing but an ordinary rise and fall of the land, making at best neutral ground for an enemy's advance.

Whenever a surprise came, therefore, it was to the landward side that attention was first directed, and thither ran St. Just when he had thrown off his civilian attire and had re-assumed his military cap, his sword and his pistol. La Montagne had preceded him, in command of the auxiliaries.

Scarcely had they mounted the crest of the cliff

leading to the fort or citadel, as it was indifferently named, when bugle-calls resounded from the opposite side and called the soldiers in all haste in that direction.

"What is it?" cried St. Just, mounting a ladder and preparing to ascend the wall.

"The Iroquois, I think, sir," replied a soldier; "but I have not seen one yet nor heard one."

St. Just mounted the wall and ran to where it joined the natural parapet of rock.

Dark as it was he could descry something crawling over the snow directly below him. Taking careful aim, he fired, but there was no further sound than the sharp crack of the pistol shot.

The object of his fire, however, no longer moved, showing him that his eyes had not been deceived. Soldiers and civilians were hurrying to and fro carrying arms and supplies, while officers impatiently gave their orders or shouted defiance at the concealed enemy.

"It is most mysterious," said St. Just, meeting his companion, La Montagne.

"Mysterious it is, but not more than usual," replied the latter.

"Where is the Colonel?"

"Drunk!" said La Montagne.

"It is impossible!"

"Well, you will see. Unless someone has picked him up, he remains on the floor by the fire, where he fell just before the alarm was given."

"Then you are in command?"

"Yes; the duty devolves upon me."

"You will get the credit of beating off this attack."

"I suppose so."

"Brave man!"

"No jesting, please. I am in command."

Once more a bugle-call rang across the snow, but this time it was given with such an energy and shrillness that there could be no mistaking its significance.

La Montagne, hastily giving an order, set off at top speed, accompanied by St. Just. Despite the heroic and determined efforts of the soldiers upon the walls and high ground, forms of such litheness and activity that there could be no mistaking them sprang upon the parapet and were gaining entrance to the city For the first time, too, there fell upon the air the awful warcry of the Iroquois. Disposing their men in open order to intercept any of the enemy who might succeed in getting in, La Montagne and St. Just gave the order to advance. Already the conflict had begun upon the parapet, where groans and war-cries alternated with alarming frequency.

St. Just had scarcely reached the top when an Iroquois sprang towards him. His pistol had carelessly remained uncharged. It therefore became a question of sword and tomahawk, Frenchman and Iroquois. St. Just, nothing daunted, advanced to the attack, but, retreating to the edge of the wall, the Iroquois suddenly threw his tomahawk and stretched St. Just bleeding upon the stones. With a shrill and fearful cry the red man sprang upon his victim, whom he now had completely at his mercy. In less time than

it takes to tell it he had encircled the prostrate man's head with his knife and torn off the scalp. All this La Montagne saw as he struggled up the ladder, but it had been done with such speed that the Indian leaped from the wall as La Montagne and his men ascended it. In other parts the Iroquois had been beaten off, thanks to the vigilance of the sentinels. That they were merely a roving band of marauders it was generally surmised, since their meagre numbers warranted no other supposition. But before retreating they had managed to do considerable damage, notably in the case of poor St. Just, who, unconscious and covered with blood, was borne off to the Hôtel Dieu.

The attack had subsided before intelligence of it reached headquarters, and the litter bearing St. Just was met by a messenger from Frontenac inquiring what was the reason of the bugle-calls and outcry. The torch-bearers and litter-men proceeded on their way, but were met again by His Excellency himself, who, receiving the reply to his message and likewise information of the wounding of St. Just, had come without an escort in their direction. As he approached, Major La Montagne, observing the well-known figure of His Excellency, halted his men and advanced respectfully to meet him.

"Is Captain St. Just dead?" demanded His Excellency.

"No, Your Excellency, although it may be that he is very near it. He has given vent to a groan or two and is breathing well."

"Of that I am only too glad to hear. Are his wounds serious, then?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. The Iroquois threw his tomahawk and wounded him deeply in the shoulder, but worse than that is the loss of his scalp."

"His scalp!" exclaimed His Excellency; "it will be a serious and disfiguring wound."

"He hates wigs," said La Montagne.

"But he must now wear one—for I hear him groaning," said His Excellency; "he must be placed at once under the care of my surgeon. Bring him to the Château. I will precede you and give directions."

St. Just opened his eyes, but they were so clogged and clotted with blood as to be almost unserviceable.

As the litter and its bearers drew up at the entrance to the Château His Excellency and the surgeon Littrais appeared, directing how and to what part of the Château he should be carried. Her Excellency and Marcelle were there to receive him.

The surgeon unbound the rags that had been hastily wrapped about the wounded man's head to protect it from the cold and to stop the bleeding, and proceeded to cleanse the wound, apply healing remedies and dress it again with fresh bandages. St. Just had quite recovered consciousness, but was as yet too weak to speak. It did not prevent him, however, from noting the movements of Marcelle and the attentions of His Excellency.

They came to see him day by day whenever the attendant apprised them that he was awake. Marcelle would talk to him by the hour and tell him of

the forest of Black John, of the cabin and of the Huron.

"You do not forget the Huron?" suggested St. Just, playfully.

"Ah, no. He was a fine warrior, brave and fleet," said Marcelle, with enthusiasm.

"Will he come to Quebec, think you?"

"No; it is too far. He has been but once to Montreal, but I will return to the cabin by and by and then I shall see him. Quebec is a queer place, I think. There is so much quarrelling and anxiety. We never had it this way at the great lake—at least, not since the coming of the Iroquois. But that was long ago."

"You live at peace, then, at the great lake?" said St. Just.

"Ah, yes. We never quarrel. Papa sometimes scolds me, and the Huron will get angry with his traps, but never with me, and then I always have Jean, who is my protector. He is very strong and barks fiercely, and he is not afraid of the wolves."

There was a step at the door.

"You are awake, then, and able to converse?" It was Frontenac himself who spoke.

"Yes, Your Excellency," replied the wounded man.

"It is very pleasing to see your quick recovery. Not many of those wounded so seriously as you have been live to tell the tale. Your valor was excellent and shall be brought to the notice of His Majesty."

St. Just turned his face away to hide the blush of pleasure and confusion.

"Where is Major La Montagne, Your Excellency?" St. Just ventured to inquire, for he was much put out that his comrade had not been once to visit him since accompanying him to the Château on the night of the attack.

"Major La Montagne has been despatched to Chambly," said Frontenac quietly, and then, observing the look of inquiry in the wounded man's face: "The fort there has been attacked again. It was part of the same band that attacked us. I have sent him to see if assistance is required. The Iroquois are getting very bold and seem to know when we are weakest and least prepared."

St. Just could not repress his desire to add a note of warning. "If Your Excellency will forgive me, you will remember what Father Billot threatened."

"Yes; but it could not go the length of treachery!" replied Frontenac, with annoyance.

CHAPTER XII.

When La Montagne made ready for his journey up the frozen St. Lawrence to Chambly, he took every precaution to ensure his own safety and that of the men accompanying him. Apart from the importance of his carrying out his instructions and the succoring, if necessary, of the fort guarding the Richelieu, the main waterway of the Iroquois, it was essential that as few lives as possible should be lost in the undertaking, since at a time of general disturbance and unrest every soldier procurable was needed to enable Frontenac to hold Quebec against the English and to keep open the avenues of trade. But so successful or so fortunate was La Montagne on his tour of discovery and relief that he returned to Quebec before the ice in the river had broken up, and thus was enabled to save weeks, if not months, of time in the taking of further precautions and in preparing means of protection for the habitants cultivating the soil.

At Chambly he had found that the fort had been attacked, as was reported, but that the strength of the place and the vigilance of its defenders had resulted in the moving off of the Iroquois to intercept a body of Ottawas coming down the St. Lawrence to Quebec. To these, however, warning was despatched, and it was confidently hoped that they had escaped the toils of their enemies.

After a delay of a week at Chambly, La Montagne went overland to a point opposite Montreal, where he crossed to that city upon the ice. Here everything was in confusion, not only from rumors of the Iroquois being abroad, but also because the interdict imposed by the Bishop was still in force. The Récollets had withdrawn, as a consequence of the suppression of their services and of the closing of their churches, to various points of retreat and hiding, many, however, finding their way to their brethren at Quebec, where they were under the especial protection of Frontenac. The pall of gloom and discontent hung heavily over the scene of visitation of the Bishop's wrath. Poverty had begun to blight the hopes of those engaged in trade. Threats of rebellion and of murder were freely made, and unless something was soon to be done for the relief of the people Frontenac's administration would once more be stamped with failure, and without a doubt once more would he be recalled. Calling into his private apartments his confidential advisor and confessor, Father Prague of the Récollets, he laid the information which La Montagne had brought before him and asked his advice.

"This Bishop is determined to push his measures to the extreme limit. He has insisted upon my recall, but if, as I believe, I have the support of the clergy excepting the Jesuits, as I certainly have of the greater part of the laity, it may be that at the final outcome of the quarrel between us His Majesty will decide in my favor. What think you?"

Frontenac spoke these words as one who had

weighed deeply the cost and consequences of his actions, and from the expression of his face it was apparent that he had determined that either he or the Bishop should be supreme once for all.

"I am at a loss to account for His Lordship's action in blocking the trade and prospects of Montreal. One would have thought that the withdrawal of the members of my order and their general inhibition would have been enough to satisfy his determination to be severe. He regards, of course, the principle involved," said Father Prague, with deliberation.

"But can anything be worse after my yielding up the play of the obnoxious 'Tartuffe' than to continue bitterness into every walk of life? It is impossible that this should go on. His Majesty is tired of our bickerings and complaints, charges and counter-charges. It will therefore be necessary to devise some means that will show the people what I mean and which, besides relieving them of distress, will liberate trade and vindicate my authority. It is true that upon my arrival I was received with every mark of esteem and confidence by both people and clergy, including the Jesuits, but by reason of some absurd ideas which Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier entertains of what he terms the laxness of my rule, he is determined to place a virtual interdict upon all pleasures. This, of course, will lead to a reaction which will throw us back to where we were before. I am determined, moreover, that the domination of the Sulpicians at Montreal, so arrogant and suspicious, shall cease. Montreal must be brought under control and the absurd contrast of

piety and licence exhibited by the clergy and traders done away with. If my authority is set at naught how can I conclude a peace with the Iroquois? The English are aware of what is going on, and the incessant raids of their Indian allies are due in no small measure to this knowledge. Even the Hurons and Abenaquis in the villages beyond the city walls are not slow to observe the effects of mandements delivered with such fierceness and recklessness. There must be more tolerance and less severity, or the habitants and noblesse alike will join the coureurs-de-bois and make government impossible."

Frontenac spoke with more than his usual animation.

"It is true," observed Father Prague, with caution, "that the coureurs-de-bois will take advantage of the condition in which the trade in beavers now is. But you are accustomed to the illegal conduct of the coureurs-de-bois. Is Your Excellency aware, however, that members of the noblesse are giving a semi-private support to His Lordship?"

"I am not aware of it," said Frontenac, with asperity, "but I shall bring one of their number before the Sovereign Council, to show them that I have not lost my influence with the King, as has been so persistently reported."

"Monsieur de Latour?" said Father Prague, suggestively.

"Why speak of him, Father Prague?" asked Frontenac.

"I have heard that he appealed to Monseigneur for

protection since you withdrew Marcelle from the convent and have expressed an intention of punishing him."

"That determines me. I shall order his trial forthwith. If he has appealed to the Bishop the whole question of the withdrawal of Marcelle from his protection will arise, and will result in new charges being preferred against me to the King, I suppose—that I have invaded the convent and carried off a member of the community. The fort that bore my name has been demolished, and the lake which it protected to the advantage of trade is now the gathering-place of all those opposed to law and order. Monsieur DeNonville did not incur my enmity by succeeding me, but he has won my esteem by his refusing to bow his neck to a yoke which is already raised in expectation of my submission. I have been notified of the arrival in the month of June of the Marquis de Beaurepaire. He is in the confidence of His Majesty, and comes to see for His Majesty's own eyes the condition of the colony. It is my purpose to conduct him in state from Quebec to Trois Rivières, to Chambly, to Montreal, and thence to the Great Lakes. But it is manifest that this can in no wise be done without the establishment of peace with the Iroquois and with Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. When the ice has gone I shall despatch an embassy to the Iroquois, amongst whom the faithful Cardot labors in ignorance of the efforts of his Bishop to undo the effects of his teaching. With his aid, and by liberal promises and still more liberal fulfilments, I shall secure peace with the Iro-

quois, at least for a time, and then I shall deal with His Lordship of Quebec."

The visit to which the Count de Frontenac referred had been decided upon by Colbert at the express command of the King. The shipments of beaver-skins had become enormous, and yet it was manifest that half the wealth of the fur-trade at least was retained in Canada through illicit trading and official connivance. The manufacture of hats from the pelt of the beaver had grown in France to immense proportions, due chiefly to the example set by His Majesty and others interested in the fur-trade of the colony in wearing hats made of that material. But of late there had been signs of a falling off in the export of fur generally, including both the beaver and the stoat, and alarmed by the prospect of a decay in trade, as well as by the reports of Canadian affairs reaching the royal and ministerial ear, it had been decided to despatch an officer of renown to look into the affairs of the country, without appearing really to do so. One so circumstanced as the Marquis de Beaurepaire would, of course, be welcomed by the Canadian noblesse, and the civil authorities would naturally show him every attention and see to it that his welcome by the Church should be of so meagre a kind in comparison that the standing of the two branches of the King's service, if so it may be described, would present a striking contrast both to the Marquis de Beaurepaire and to the people. More than once charges of laxness had been preferred, as we have seen, by Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier to the King against Frontenac, and the coming

trial of Latour was to serve as a public refutation of all these charges which at any time had been made. Word had been received that the marquis had sailed. Then a ship from St. Malo calling at Plaisance had denied the rumor. But these denials, and there were many, were supposed to have originated with sympathizers of the Bishop, who, of course, had seen that the dispatch of a military instead of a clerical ambassador augured more of the ascendancy of the military influence at the French court than of that of the church. The Bishop, on the other hand, who was in reality too sincere in his efforts for the welfare of the people of the colony to pause to think of diplomacy and its effect upon the public mind, worked himself up into a condition of mental ferment over the proposed, or as he fancied it, the threatened visit, which resulted in utterances and decrees, or rather warnings from the pulpit, that served better to apprise his enemies of what he intended than to influence the faithful in his behalf. Seeing how mistaken the attitude of His Lordship was—at least, from a political point of view—members of the various orders betrayed their lack of interest, and as he was not a member of any religious order himself, he had no agents bound to carry out his directions and to seek his welfare except the Jesuits, who at the moment were discredited.

"Monsieur de Champigny has written a very full account of our public affairs," remarked Father Prague. "He has spoken of the necessity of increasing the garrison and has, I am told, referred to the two prisoners in the Bastille."

"Messieurs de Varennes and de Lino?" said Frontenac, in surprise. "His Majesty will not thank him for that. He had done better to remark upon the high price of salt, which, however, is more a matter of his own doing; or better still, upon the building of my house. That, I fancy, will never be done."

"Nor has he omitted the usual complaints against Your Excellency," continued the priest.

"That were too much to expect," said Frontenac, laughing bitterly. "He complains of my draughts upon the treasury, although the returns go to France and not to us. The balance should be struck at Versailles and not at Quebec. Even the timber for masts exported, and of such admittedly excellent quality, is paid for as if the traders had no right to recompense, while, when the harvest was destroyed by caterpillars, a few bushels of seed were given us as a great compliment. It must be admitted, and I shall always be ready to acknowledge it, that on occasion the minister becomes unusually generous—not, however, when M. de Mareuil was arrested in connection with the comedies. De Villebon has laid himself open to just complaints. The English sail up and down the gulf with perfect freedom, when a vessel or two, well handled, would drive them to other waters in a trice. However, if there is room for dissatisfaction on that score, there is not on the grounds of sending us patents of nobility."

"Your Excellency has heard of the capture of Fort Nelson?"

"Yes; some time ago. With the territories of the

Hudson Bay thus in our hands, and with a forward and progressive policy against the Iroquois and the English, our beloved France would soon be mistress of all that part of the continent between Mexico and the Polar regions, and between the Ohio River and the Atlantic Ocean. But what can we do when greed and intrigue take the place of trade and fair dealing?"

"Would it not be better to take Monsieur de Champigny and visit the minister?" suggested Father Prague.

"Leaving de Saint-Vallier to control the colony? Never!" said Frontenac, firmly. "If the Intendant choose to go himself I shall raise no objection beyond giving written replies to any statements which he may make to the King, but in my opinion life in Canada, so long like a cauldron of boiling water, will ultimately boil over and put out the fire beneath it. It is too intense to last."

CHAPTER XIII.

Louis XIV. had set his heart upon the firm establishment of French monarchical institutions in New France. Throughout his correspondence with his viceroys and intendants in Canada it is made plain that these officials were expected to encourage to their utmost the adoption of the various orders of French society by the people of the colony. This introduction of the culture and social system of Old France into Canada was no easy matter, since the freedom and independence of manner of the Canadians was incompatible with the narrowness and inflexibility of French conventionalism. The natural result was a sort of compromise by which an aristocracy became established in a way suitable both to French and Canadian ideas without interfering with the freedom of the populace or with the reserve of the court. The people at large despised the trammels of etiquette and ceremony, yet had a native polish of their own which gave a dignity to their bearing suitable to the independence of their manners. Accustomed to perils of every kind from their youth up, hardy almost beyond belief—to the extent of going barefoot and half-naked in winter—born and bred in the very lap of nature, in a land unlimited in extent and unexcelled in beauty, French-Canadians and coureurs-de-bois, half-breeds

and Indians, all alike could in no wise be brought to substitute the artificial for the real, or the ceremonial for the natural. With this limitation, the institution of a Canadian aristocracy composed of earls, counts, barons and gentilhommes, or untitled nobles, was a success. Their seignories, held in feudal tenure, lay along the St. Lawrence River from Montreal to Quebec, and in many cases the descendants of the seigneurs occupy them at this day. But, however unceremonious were the manners of the coureurs-de-bois, their fine physique and reckless courage caused them to be sought after as ornaments of the court—when warrants for their arrest were not too many and too insistent to be overlooked.

The Château St. Louis formed part of a wall of fortification. Behind it, and upon a slightly higher elevation, was the fort or citadel, which, with the Château, enclosed a square which served as a parade-ground for the officers and soldiers of the garrison, and as a promenade for the residents of the Château.

At either end of the Château a watch-tower arose to a considerable height, commanding an extensive view of the St. Lawrence. The young ladies of the vice-regal residence were accustomed after their return from early mass to walk in the square, or if the day were unpleasant, to seek the towers, where coffee was served, conversation enjoyed, and the highway of the St. Lawrence scanned. Expeditions to points distant from the city walls were rarely undertaken without ample military escort, since it was never known at what moment a treacherous Indian

would seek to gratify his taste for butchery and blood. The gentlemen of the Château and of the fort occupied themselves in attending meetings of the Sovereign Council, inspecting walls and fortifications, and in drilling the garrison, alternating their duties when possible with the pleasures of the chase. The feeling of uncertainty, insecurity and mutual dependence inseparable from a condition such as was that of the people and garrison of Quebec infused into military and civil life a quality of seriousness which its appearance and pretensions belied. The daily routine was occasionally varied by the arrival from France of young women as wives for the soldiers, or of young ladies intended as wives for the officers of the garrison. The latter were installed at the Château, and since they were always pretty and accomplished, they lent a charm to it which did much to redeem it from the character of a prison. In time they, too, imbibed the strange spirit of liking for the woods and streams and untrammelled life of the colonists, which, to a limited extent, they were permitted to enjoy, and became one with the country and its inhabitants. At certain seasons, and with proper escorts, the noblesse were visited in their seignories, where the life of the woods was tasted and a fondness for the country acquired. At the time of which we speak a number of these daughters of French gentlemen were quartered in the Château under His Excellency's especial protection, but whether in grace of movement, charm of manner, or personal beauty, none could hope to vie with Marcelle Courtebois.

The day was dark and gloomy. The east wind had been blowing all the preceding day and night. The clouds looked ready to shower flakes of unseasonable snow upon the ground, already waking to the pulse of spring.

"It is a dreadful day to be shut up here when Major La Montagne is ready to take us to Bonport," remarked Sophie Benoit, one of those who had come from France three months before on a visit to Her Excellency.

"This is the day of the trial," said Marguerite Valin, softly.

Marcelle started and turned slightly pale, although it was really no further concern of hers.

"It seems to me unwise," said Lithole Beauharnais; "that Monsieur Latour should be tried for an offence the remembrance of which must only serve to make our sweet sister here blush."

"That is not it, at all," replied Marguerite Valin, laughing. She was older and knew more of life than the others. "Her Excellency told me that the affair would have been left to be forgotten but for the danger that the Bishop would complain in secret to the King of the conduct of His Excellency's protégé."

"And of the pretty speeches of Captain St. Just at the convent," said Sophie Benoit.

"Falsehoods, you mean," said Lithole Beauharnais, boldly, but with an inclination to laugh.

Lithole Beauharnais was the niece of the Count of that name whose seignory lay below the Ile d'Orleans. Her cousin, of the Fourth Regiment of Chasseurs of

the French army, was home on leave, and having spent the greater part of his holiday at Beauharnais with his father, he had come up to Quebec to say farewell. He was a handsome man of distinguished appearance.

"Did you hear the mandement to-day?" continued Lithole Beauharnais, drawing her work from her pocket, which consisted of thread done in a cross-stitch very fashionable in those days.

"Not to-day," said Sophie Benoit; "I had to hurry away. Has someone stolen a pig?"

"How irreverent you are," exclaimed Marguerite Valin, pretending to be shocked, although, as a matter of fact, the mandements read from the church steps of Notre Dame after mass frequently concerned no more serious topic. "It referred to the forthcoming trip of His Excellency to Bonport."

"Indeed, and what did it contain?"

"Those who have not fasted for two weeks of Lent must not go," said Marguerite Valin, with malicious deliberation.

"You will not have it all to yourself, even if I can't go," said Sophie.

"But it is St. Just with her," replied the other, referring to Marcelle.

"What! The man without a scalp?" and Sophie laughed immoderately at the suggestion.

"Have you heard Father Vauban?" asked Marcelle, anxious to put an end to the silly badinage of the other two.

"Is he handsome?" asked Sophie.

"Yes."

"Ravishing?"

"He speaks well."

"Mon dieu! I prefer a man who looks well to one who speaks well. I am tired of incessant talking. There are nearly as many to do the talking as there are to be talked to."

"If Mother Marie de l'Incarnation hears these rebellious words she will reprove you," said Marcelle.

"One would think that you had spent a year in the convent instead of a day," said Sophie, with a smile. "It would have been better if you had."

"When does Monsieur le Majeur arrive?" asked Marguerite Valin, turning to Lithole.

"He is here."

"Not in the Château?"

"Yes."

There was a tremendous fluttering of wings at this announcement, on the part of Sophie Benoit and Marguerite Valin.

"I will bring him in," said Lithole, laughing. "He is with His Excellency."

She went out and returned, as she had threatened, with her cousin. He bowed profoundly on his introduction, and stood smiling at the pretty group.

"He speaks to Marcelle more than is necessary?" said Sophie Benoit to Marguerite Valin.

"Let us hear what he will say. Hush! Listen—what?"

"His Excellency commands me," said Major Beauharnais, in his deep sonorous tone, "to take you all

to Beauharnais for a visit. The ice is out of the river and the chill has gone from the air."

"I don't know about that part of it," said Sophie, glad of the chance to enter into the conversation. "But we shall be glad to go."

"And you, demoiselle?" said he, turning to Marcelle. Marcelle assented.

Sophie and Marguerite were literally enraged. "The daughter of a wood-ranger, an outlaw, a brandy-seller! Indeed!"

There was a knock at the door. A note was handed in. It was for Marcelle, and read:

"I am condemned to the Bastille. It is a punishment too severe for my crime, which, indeed, was not one. I ask you to intervene.

"LATOUR.

"To DEMOISELLE MARCELLE,

"At the Château St. Louis."

Marcelle was moved by the dignity and sincerity of the few simple words of the note. She gathered up her needles and politely withdrew to consult Her Excellency.

The others wondered.

"She is handsome," suggested Sophie, resuming the conversation.

"Glorious!" said Beauharnais, clasping his hands.

"But she is of plebeian origin," said Marguerite Valin, commiseratingly.

"With good blood, though, I am told," said Beauharnais.

"What, already?" exclaimed Sophie Benoit. "Ah! well. It is too sudden to endure. You are dazzled by her eyes."

Major Beauharnais saw that he had gone a little too far if he would not make trouble.

"That is true, but everything is brilliant here."

Sophie laughed, but Marguerite looked angrily at him from under her eyebrows.

When Marcelle left the room she descended into the private apartment of Madame de Frontenac and showed her Latour's appeal.

"What think you?" asked Madame de Frontenac, when she had finished reading it.

"If it were not against His Excellency's wish I would pardon him. He is sorry."

"Who brought the note?" asked Madame de Frontenac.

"I do not know, Your Excellency."

"We shall see," said Her Excellency, leaning forward and pulling the bell. A few questions to her maid followed, then turning to Marcelle:

"No. It was the aide-de-camp. But here is His Excellency himself," and the tall and handsome form of Frontenac parted the curtains and entered as she spoke.

"It is you, Marcelle," he said, with more than usual warmth. "You have got Monsieur Latour's appeal?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"What will you do—be harsh or merciful?"

"As Your Excellency judges best—be merciful," said Marcelle, dropping her voice to a whisper, while her eyes sought the floor.

"He made a most impassioned appeal for mercy," continued Frontenac, meditatively. "I do not think he was guilty in mind. He is more of a lover than a criminal, I think. Nor did he seem to try to avoid arrest—nay, rather sought it. We shall then pardon him after a twelvemonth; and now," raising his voice to a louder tone, "let us seek our maidens fair in yonder tower, where they sit and gossip all day long."

"And into the night, too," suggested Madame de Frontenac, laughingly.

"My dear," said her husband, holding his finger up in mock disapproval, "then that is your fault."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE spring had come and gone. The melting snow and swollen streams and general dampness under foot, the most disagreeable features of the most disagreeable season in Canada, had disappeared, leaving all nature in the loveliness of June. The seignory of Beauharnais extended from the River St. Lawrence to the uplands in the rear, a distance of forty miles, and lay along the river for the space of four. The entire estate, wreathed in stretches of forest and sparkling with the waters of lakelets and small streams, presented an alluring picture of sylvan beauty. With the exception of the manor-house and of a small portion in the hands of censitaires, cultivated according to the tenure of their holdings, the face of nature remained unmarred by any evidence of the hand of man. To the left, where over a long stretch of rolling country a forest of elms reared their tall trunks and shaggy branches in primeval grandeur, the underlying turf was green and soft as the grass-plot of a well-kept park. Farther westward a ridge of pines outlined the margin of a pinewood forest, where the great trees towered aloft, symbols of stateliness and strength. Pools of water marked the deepening course of brooks that rose in hillside springs and ultimately joined their tiny currents with the river. Along the edges

of these streams, navigable only by the birch-bark, and upon the shores of these lakelets of the forest, the greenness and luxuriance of June tempted the explorer to land and idle away the passing hour.

Life in the city had been unusually active and disturbing during the preceding winter. Quarrels of a vexatious and often stupid character between the authorities of Church and State had rendered it, except at occasional intervals, almost unendurable, while the continual fear of the Iroquois by land and of the English by sea had made vigilance the price of mere existence. In the summer, however, quarrels and fears alike were almost of necessity laid aside. Ecclesiastical visits to distant parishes relieved the tension within the city, whilst the coming down from the north and west of the Hurons and Ottawas gave the Iroquois an opportunity of seeking their enemies elsewhere and to a large extent drew off their attention from Quebec and its environs.

Preparations were being made for the outing to Beauharnais. Canoes of the frail birch-bark, but of exquisite mould and workmanship, were already at hand. Arquebuses and pistols furnished arms for the soldiers chosen to accompany the party as a guard and for the purposes of display. Cushions, cloths of velvet, and every accessory of luxury and comfort made the birch-barks dreams of beauty and idleness. Expert paddlers and pilots were selected and put in charge. The lazy current of the great river alluringly invited those in search of pleasure to trust themselves upon its ample bosom, whilst the blue of the sky and

the softness of the air soothed the senses into forgetfulness of danger and of care. Baskets of food and cases of French wine had already been sent on in advance to the destination. As the bell of Notre Dame announced to all the world that it was the hour of eleven, ladies and gentlemen in the picturesque attire of hunters and coureurs-de-bois strolled down the winding street to the water's edge and prepared to embark for Beauharnais.

As Marcelle's eyes wandered for a moment over scenes like to those familiar to her from childhood, and as she saw once more in fancy the canoe of the Huron flying swallow-like over the surface of the water, or the form of her father laden down with "trade" trudging wearily through the forest, an indescribable longing to be free came over her and tears for a moment bedimmed her vision. A sigh escaped her.

"Why do you sigh? Alas! peerless Marcelle," said a voice beside her, "are you mourning for the cabin of your childhood and the voice of the Huron?"

The reference to the Huron startled her. What could Major Beauharnais know of her or her thoughts beyond what he had seen and heard within the castle walls? She looked at him intently for a moment.

"Yes," she replied, with unconscious sadness; "the forest that I see yonder skirting the river appeals to me and fills my thoughts with yearning and my eyes with tears."

"But you are too beautiful, Marcelle, for such a life as that, made as you are to adorn courts and palaces," he continued.

"Not so, Major Beauharnais. You are too kind to be guilty of the cruelty of mere idle flattery, yet your language is extravagant and causes me sorrow."

"To me my language is neither extravagant nor sorrowful. I, too, have an intense longing, but it is the longing of love. Neither the sky above, nor the green of the hills, nor the murmuring of the brook, once so dear to me, has the power to enchain my thoughts for a single instant. It is of you I think, and—"

"Come, demoiselle! Come, Beauharnais! Look alive, or we shall be here all day and miss the evening at the camp-fire if we get on no faster than this. All have embarked except Demoiselle Sophie and you two." It was St. Just who spoke, and his voice showed a trace of bitterness and chiding.

"We are ready," said Beauharnais, gruffly.

"And you will take me in your canoe, too?" asked Sophie Benoit, approaching,

"Certainly; we shall be happy," replied Beauharnais, but in a tone of forced politeness.

Springing lightly in, Beauharnais dipped his paddle and the canoe in a moment was trembling upon the moving waters of the river.

"They have got far ahead," remarked Sophie, looking over her shoulder at the others in the distance.

To this Beauharnais made no reply except to sheathe his paddle deeper in and to put more strength into the stroke. They sped swiftly over the water in response to his efforts, and before long were within hailing distance of the others. There were ten canoes

in all, some holding five passengers and others no more than two.

The dreamy stillness of the air was ever and anon broken by the voices of the laughing and the gay. From the distant city, too, came occasional sounds borne far upon the surface of the water, and now and then arose the cries of ducks and geese belated on their long journey to the north, as flocks of them went streaming swiftly by. Wild pigeons screamed from the deep recesses of the forest, while the noisy blackbird, and the sweet note of the oriole varied the harsh music of the waterfowl. But all would grow silent again and leave the world of forest and stream to be peopled with the strange and mysterious beings which human thoughts under such conditions are prone to suggest.

An Indian brave, paddling silently and swiftly, flashed his paddle in the sunlight and was gone.

Sophie Benoit looked up from her day dreams with a start.

"An Indian!"

"Yes; an Abenaqui," said Beauharnais.

"Where do they come from?"

"From Acadia."

"And are they brave?"

"Yes; but they are cruel."

"Like the Iroquois?"

"Do not speak of them!"

The manor-house of Beauharnais now came in sight. Built of stone and made to serve the double purpose of comfort and protection, it stood upon the summit

of a hill some distance from the river, looking out from a grove of maples towards Quebec. A broad verandah, festooned with budding clematis and native ivy, encircled it, and from its steps a man of nearer four than three-score years came slowly down to meet the visitors. His long grey hair gave him a peculiarly venerable aspect, but did not suffice to hide the undimmed brightness of his eyes. This was the Count de Beauharnais himself. With pleasant smile and welcoming handshake he greeted them all, contriving in the spirit of gallantry of that age to pay a subtle compliment to the ladies. To Marcelle he made a somewhat lower bow, and then stood silent in admiration of her beauty.

Madame Béranger at this moment came up. "Count de Beauharnais, have you ever seen my daughter Élise looking better?"

"Never," said the old man, looking about in quest of the object of the remark. "But who is this lady?"

Madame Béranger was annoyed and answered impatiently, "A mere trader's daughter!"

"That is not so bad. I see she comes with Eugène."

"She has forced herself upon him and Sophie Benoit, too."

The Count opened his eyes wide in incredulity. "Women as beautiful as she do not force themselves," he said. "You are ready for some refreshment. Eugène would not put us to the trouble and has brought his own food and wine. The tables are ready. How is His Excellency?"

"His Excellency is well," replied Madame Béranger, with an air of satisfaction. "He is contemplating a tour of the advance posts. At Montreal the Sulpicians are in fear of the Jesuits."

"So they ought to be," rejoined the Count, emphatically. "The Sulpicians come in late and wish to take advantage of all that the Jesuits have done before, simply because the Jesuits cannot appoint a Bishop."

"Yes, yes; you are right," assented Madame Béranger. "Are you taking me to dine?"

"With pleasure."

"And Élise?"

"But Eugène will do that."

"At your request?"

"Certainly—at my request."

Madame Béranger called over one of the servants and said, in the hearing of the Count: "You will say to Major Beauharnais that the Count de Beauharnais wishes him to take Demoiselle Béranger to table."

She stood watching for the effect of her message and noted with delight the apparent acquiescence of Eugène. Servants now passed about everywhere, recalling the wanderers of the party, who ascended the steps and took their seats. Élise sat immediately upon the left of Major Beauharnais, but Marcelle sat upon his right.

"It is insufferable," said Madame Béranger to Sophie Benoit, when she saw it. "Are we to make way for the daughter of a mere outlaw?"

Sophie Benoit's eyes were ablaze with jealousy. Madame Béranger noticed this with satisfaction.

"This comes of His Excellency's desire to please," she said.

"Nay, more," said Sophie; "it comes from the Bishop."

"Oh, bother the Bishop; he is the cause of all the quarrelling. I will not allow Élise to associate any longer with this girl, Excellency or no Excellency."

"The Count de Beauharnais is very old," said Sophie.

"Very—and feeble," added Madame Béranger, in a whisper.

"He cannot live long."

"No. The dear old gentleman is so fond of living, too."

"Very. And then the Major will succeed him."

"And Marcelle."

"Never!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Madame Béranger, incautiously, "that the County of Beauharnais shall never be presided over by a wood-witch."

"And yet she is not beautiful."

"Common—vulgar!"

"But how do you propose to bring it about?"

"You have heard of the escapade of Monsieur Latour?"

"Oh, yes; long ago. He is in love with her."

"In love? Mad you should rather say."

"If he would kidnap her," suggested Sophie.

"He will not try that silly trick again. Look!" almost screamed Madame Béranger, as Major Beauharnais gave Marcelle his hand to descend the stair.

"What an air she has!" said Sophie.

The sun having begun to sink behind the distant hills, it was deemed both necessary and wise that the departure of the holiday party should no longer be delayed. The moon already shone with starry brightness. The violet band of softened color along the horizon faded gradually into the deepening blue of the upper sky and approaching night. Stars, bursting into sudden brilliance, thickly dotted the firmament, and the lights of the city, twinkling by the river's edge and high up in the castle overhead, warned all that to dally longer with song and nature's loveliness was to incur danger from the restless red man and to cause anxiety in the hearts of those they had left behind.

When Madame Bernard-Pallu undertook the somewhat adventurous task of getting Marcelle away from the convent, in order chiefly, as we have seen, to check the ambitious designs of Madame Béranger, she counted not without her host. Too old to take part in the festivities of the court, which often led to fatiguing journeys by land and water, she was yet able to follow in her fancy the doings of such as Madame Béranger, who had a daughter's fortune to make. Had she been present on this occasion she would have felt amply repaid for her boldness in the chagrin of Élise Béranger's mother and in the venomous jealousy of Sophie Benoit. Women are more

cunning than men as a rule, and once resolved upon accomplishing their purpose, no labyrinth can puzzle them or stone wall resist them. Sophie Benoit meant to dethrone Marcelle at the first favorable opportunity, and, of course, she was aware of great possibilities of help in the direction of Madame Béranger, who, she fancied, was crafty enough to be a tool, but not deep enough to direct the attack and to reap the advantage. As the picknickers made haste to obey the request of Major Beauharnais that they seek their craft and prepare for immediate departure, Sophie Benoit looked at Madame Béranger significantly, and that lady returned a look that spoke volumes. It was no time for further parley or for the maturing of plans for the future. That must be done at leisure in the city and within the seclusion of their own nests. Sophie therefore stepped lightly into the canoe, as if she had not a care in the world, turning at the same time upon her conductor one of those bewitching smiles for which she was justly famous. Marcelle followed. As the flotilla got clear away and each canoe began to seek its own course, whilst still in the company of the others, the melancholy hoot of the great wood-owl boomed across the water.

"The giant's despair," said Marcelle, half unthinkingly.

"What is that?" asked Sophie, in whom the fear of night had succeeded to the vivacity of the day.

"Merely a story with us in the woods."

"Please tell it to us," said Beauharnais, beseechingly.

Sophie begged for it, too, and Marcelle began:

"In the days when the Hurons were a nation, living to the south and east of Lake Huron, before the Iroquois came and killed them or drove them farther in, they were far in advance of all the Indian tribes of North America. His Excellency told me so when I told him that my mother was a Huron. They lived in houses of birch-bark and tents of deerskin, clean and finely ornamented. Fine stalwart men the braves were, too, such as no men save the Mohawks were. But the Hurons were more than that. They were kind to their squaws and did not make them do all the work, as the Iroquois and Algonquins do. At one time a woman was chief of the Hurons, and the fame of her beauty and courage was far extended, even to the Seminoles and the Dacotahs. There was peace with the Iroquois then, and the Ottawas kept to themselves. The Hurons were the pride of the forest. No one was so fleet of foot or could go so far. The elk, the cariboo and the red deer could run for three days and three nights, but the Huron could outlast them. The moose, too, a Huron would fight single-handed. One of the villages was situated on the shores of the lake of the Eries. There were six score in it, all told—warriors, women and children. One day a great canoe, longer than the largest war-canoe, which will hold thirty braves, came to the landing place, but the warriors in it were not red men. They were spirits clad in cloaks of red and grey, with plumes upon their heads in place of eagle feathers. The strangers landed, and the Indians, hidden in the

woods, saw them kneel and raise their hands to the sun. Then they arose and went up toward the village, holding their plumes in their hands and walking slowly. Dawnflower, the chief of the Hurons, advanced out of the woods to meet them. When the strangers saw her they raised their hands aloft and gave utterance to strange sounds, such as the Indians had never heard before. Then they pointed to their mouths and signified that they wished something to eat. Dawnflower then called to the Huron women, who brought deer's-meat that had been dried in the sun and berries. The strangers ate the meat and berries and drank from the water of the lake, and bowed their heads and clapped their hands as tokens of their gratitude. The Huron chief took a violent fancy to the dress and ornaments of the visitors and would gladly have exchanged food or Indian dress and bead-work for them. Some of the strangers, seeing her anxiety, would have willingly given some of their cloaks and ornaments in exchange, but the chief of the white spirits refused. He made known to the Hurons that he could shoot an arrow farther and straighter than the best of them, but that there must be a prize for competition, and that if the Huron warrior should win he should have a cloak and head-plume with ornaments and a handful of beads. This was agreed to by the Hurons, who offered food as the prize in the event of the white-faced stranger's success. But the chief of the strangers shook his head. Then they offered a huge bearskin and the horns of a moose. But these he refused just as firmly as the

others. Being in despair the Hurons asked him what he required. At this he pointed to the chief and declared that he wished to have her for his wife. But the Hurons in turn positively declined to consider such a proposition and murmured deeply at the unreasonableness of the request. While they were disputing, Dawnflower, who now coveted the dress and ornaments more than ever, sent an Indian lad off into the forest with a message. This message was for her lover, who at the time was in the forest engaged in building a birch-bark canoe. He was the strongest of the Hurons, and in all the land that bordered on the great lake of the Eries there was none who could equal him in the distance to which he could send an arrow. Under one pretence and another the strangers were detained till Black Fox should arrive. At last he came, and with all possible speed, as the words of the message had directed him.

"Dawnflower met him at the edge of the forest and spoke to him of her proposal to pit him against the stranger in a trial of shooting, with herself as the prize. The proposal by no means met his approval, and he firmly declined to risk the maiden in a mere trial of skill, and that, too, against an unknown and mysterious stranger. The girl, however, would not permit him to decline, and threatened if he did not instantly obey her, that she would break her pledge to him to become his wife. It went hard with Black Fox to refuse under these conditions, and besides, the others had begun to taunt him with being afraid, some of the braves hoping to see him beaten, while the women were anxious to see the Dawnflower taken

away. Finally he agreed, and stepping into his lodge, brought forth a new bow and several arrows, and tried them and proved them true. Dawnflower was in ecstasies, and danced and sang with glee. The mark, or target, a sapling of the size of a woman's wrist, was selected and stuck in the ground. A hundred paces were marked off from it by the white man, who threw his plume, cloak and ornaments upon the ground in preparation for the contest. The sunlight striking upon the ornaments made them shine with such splendor as the Indian girl had never dreamed of. The chief of the strangers then made a sign to the Indian to shoot first, which the latter agreed to, since it gave him a slight advantage. Black Fox fitted an arrow and took his stand with care. Suddenly raising his bow he drew the string, but the arrow missed its mark by a hair's-breadth, merely ruffling the bark. The stranger then put an arrow in his gun, and it was by this means that he intended to deceive the Hurons, for they had never seen a gun before, or anything like it, and were not aware of its power and precision. They stood by and watched with curiosity the white chief making his preparations to shoot. He stood close under a tree and behind it, so as to shield his eyes from the sun, and there was a smile of calm and malicious confidence upon his face. At last the stranger put his bow to his shoulder. Taking careful aim, he was in the very act of firing when a great wood-owl in the tree above him gave a loud and mournful cry that caused him to falter and miss his aim. The report of the gun-shot stunned

the Hurons for a moment, and they grasped their weapons in a threatening way, but seeing that nothing more than a sound came of it, and that the prize was theirs, they laughed good-naturedly, and taunted the paleface with his failure to make good his boast. Then, too, after all their jealousy of Dawnflower on account of her beauty, and of Black Fox for his strength and skill, they were full of joy that they should be deprived of neither. Black Fox, you will be pleased to know, married Dawnflower shortly afterwards. There was a great ceremony, in which all the Huron customs were faithfully observed. The most important event connected with it was the adoption of the white wood-owl as his totem by Black Fox. As to what happened to the white men I know nothing, but it was said afterwards that the party of strangers was made up of French explorers and others who had come with the first to land in this country."

The pretty story drew to a close as the canoe came alongside the wharf.

"That was lovely, Marcelle," exclaimed Sophie Benoit. "What was the girl's name?"

"Marcelle," said Beauharnais, quietly, meaning to praise her beauty.

The lights of Lower Town, in warehouses and shops along the strand, beamed across the water, giving token of the awakening industry of the season of trade, while far up in the Château and citadel overhead the windows blazed with candles, signals to the holiday-makers, so that they might not miss their way.

CHAPTER XV.

SOPHIE BENOIT was delighted when she thought over the alliance she had made with Madame Béranger for the avenging of her wrongs and the humbling of Marcelle. They had a common object up to a certain point, and after that "Voilà!" as Sophie exclaimed. It would be necessary for each one to look after herself. Sophie was a malignant little thing down deep in her heart. She knew that Marcelle was in every way worthy to be the favorite that she was. Her modesty was equal to her beauty. In fact, she seemed altogether unconscious of her superior charms. But she had taken the fancy of the greatest catch of the year, the heir of Beauharnais. It was a prize worth striving for. Sophie Benoit would dissemble, she would pretend to be Marcelle's friend, but she would find a means to destroy her utterly if necessary to her own success.

Madame Béranger was equally ill-wishing, but not so subtle—equally wicked and merciless in her intentions, but as a strategist commonplace, at least in comparison.

Sophie appeared at Madame Béranger's the next morning. How her eyes beamed over her coffee as she looked after the restless Madame Béranger and besought her to come and sit down, in order that they

might begin their conversation in earnest. At last the elder lady was ready.

"Élise has gone out. I am so sorry," began Madame Béranger. "But perhaps it will not prevent our discussion."

"All the better," laughed Sophie Benoit, maliciously. "I dislike saying things of importance before girls. They are so giddy and do not understand. Very well. What do you think?"

"You saw it all yourself, more than I. It is insufferable. Had he chosen one of ourselves here in Quebec we should have been satisfied, but an interloper! It is not fair. Who could blame us for rescuing Beauharnais from her claws?"

"Who, indeed?" observed Sophie.

"What plan have you to propose?" asked Madame Béranger.

"I would hint that she is not—" and Sophie's eyes blazed with hellish jealousy.

At first Madame Béranger did not understand. Then, as she waited in vain for Sophie to finish her sentence, it dawned upon her what was meant.

"It would be fatal," she remarked, in a low whisper.

"She deserves it," said Sophie, firmly. "She has no business here."

"But how could we have heard it?"

"From one of the trappers for your husband."

"That would be two years ago."

"Yes, but that would not matter."

"Perhaps not," replied Madame Béranger, reflec-

tively, "but it might get me into trouble with His Excellency."

"Can't you find the man?" suggested Sophie, impatiently.

"You might; you might. It will be easy for you. You understand," said Madame Béranger, delightedly. "But I do not know one who would do it. They are friendly to the coureurs. A few pistoles, eh?"

"Yes; a hundred if necessary. But he must say so in the hearing of an outsider. Then we can carry it on."

"How easy!" exclaimed Madame Béranger, excitedly. "You are so clever. I am like Carole to you. It is a fine thing to have your abilities."

Thus the two women settled upon a plan for Marcelle's destruction without a qualm. Their annoyance was too recent for them to delay longer the arranging of details.

"I know a man," said Madame Béranger, after a moment's pause, and then she hurriedly left the room without apology, returning in a few minutes ready for the street.

"What! so soon?" said Sophie Benoit. "You must be confident of success."

"I am," replied the elder woman. "Even if it isn't true, so far as we know, it is quite likely that it is, all the same. Besides, she deserves it. Let her go back to her pen in the woods and we will say no more."

Sophie was speechless with delight at this monologue carried on in a hurried whisper.

"You will let me know his name?" she asked, as they were about to part.

"This very day," said Madame Béranger.

"When?" suggested Sophie, leading her gently on to the desired end.

"As soon as I have everything ready."

"Oh, thank you—on your way back?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, good-bye. I shall remain in all day waiting."

"Good-bye," and Madame Béranger waved her little gloved hand.

"Good!" soliloquized Sophie, as she returned alone. "She is off. But I will make assurance sure. I shall have somebody within hearing. I have no mind to be trapped."

Meanwhile Madame Béranger sought the lower town, going rapidly along the base of the wall till she reached the stand where she was well known as a purchaser of wild fruits from the Indians and of whatever else a thrifty housewife could get of a useful character at a decidedly moderate price.

"Where is Octave?" she said, stopping at last before a group of women who stood gossiping for want of something else to do.

"He is in the little magasin yonder," answered one, pointing to a shed back of a great storehouse. Madame Béranger soon found Octave, and after glancing about to see that there were no listeners, she opened the subject nearest her heart. It is needless to say that it was done adroitly. Old Octave suspected

nothing. He supposed that the widow of his former master needed help from him, and being grateful, he was ready to give it.

It was true that he had been on more than one occasion in the vicinity of Black John's cabin. It was true that Marcelle was often left alone there day after day. It was a free-and-easy life, to say the least of it. Indians and others constantly visited the cabin, and often called when John was away.

"Had any gossip ever been heard concerning Marcelle?" Octave shrugged his shoulders.

"Had there?" and Madame Béranger grew impatient.

"There was sure to be," replied Octave, dubiously; "but what of that?"

Madame Béranger smiled. "But what of that?" she echoed in her heart. Had she not possession of all the facts leading up to what she so ardently desired? The locale, the personages, suspicions—all were there. What more was necessary? She stopped for a moment longer to arrange with Octave for the delivery of some trifles which she purchased, and then she sped up the steep hillside,—so quickly and over-hastily that it was necessary to stop to take breath. Sophie Benoit was at home. She admitted Madame Béranger without ceremony.

"It is true!" exclaimed Madame Béranger, kissing her; "it is true!"

"Can you prove it?" asked Sophie, eagerly.

"No, no!" answered Madame Béranger, with mingled surprise and contempt in her voice; "but what

of that? It is likely that she bore no very good reputation, and even that is enough."

"Yes; it is enough, and safer," assented Sophie. "What will you do now?"

"Speak of it, of course."

"Who was it that told you?"

"Leave that to me," smiled Madame Béranger, artfully. She knew enough not to put herself in her companion's power.

"Will you tell Madame Schmidt?"

"I will tell Rosie Larocque. She cannot keep a secret even if she were to be burned for telling it."

"And then?"

"Mathilde Birot."

"Whom can I tell?" asked Sophie.

"You tell Mathilde."

"What?"

"That Marcelle lived alone in the cabin for weeks at a time, with Indians, coureurs, brandy-sellers, drunken guides and the King's men."

"She is not fit to associate with."

"I should think not."

"Nor to speak to."

"Vile! that is what I say," and Madame Béranger gathered up her skirts preparatory to leaving. She kissed Sophie affectionately.

"You did find a tool, then?" said Sophie from the doorstep, as Madame Béranger reached the roadway.

"Yes. Good-bye; au revoir!"

Sophie re-entered, muttering, "That is satisfactory. Now we shall see."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Comte de Frontenac occasionally allowed himself the dissipation of sipping tea with his wife and her ladies-in-waiting. It was an interval of relaxation between the cares of the day and the formal entertainment of guests in the evening. On this particular occasion, however, Her Excellency was alone with Marcelle, who had long since become her constant companion and favorite. They were in earnest discussion when His Excellency entered.

"But, my dear, why should you feel the least compunction about remaining? Surely we have done nothing to induce you to leave us," said Madame de Frontenac, reproachfully.

"What is this?" exclaimed Frontenac, pausing, as he caught the tenor of the conversation. "Who is thinking of leaving us?"

"I, Marcelle, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, with pretended boldness.

"And why?" he asked, in a disappointed tone.

"I have too long trespassed on your kindness, Your Excellency. It was bold of me, and thoughtless, very thoughtless, to come across the forest to Quebec to see the city and the court, of which I had heard so much, but I must plead the haste and ignorance of youth; and alas! my vanity, as well."

"If it were not that I see my wife and you have been discussing this question seriously, I should order you instantly to forbear causing us pain and yourself a needless annoyance. But do you wish to leave us?"

"Oh, Your Excellency, no," replied Marcelle. "I was, and am yet, a poor girl, born and brought up in the forest; but, for all that, I am not destitute of gratitude and shame."

"There is no need, Marcelle," said Madame de Frontenac, reprovingly, "for you to use so harsh a word as shame. You ran a great danger, and even risked your life, in coming so far and in the manner you did, but, thanks be to God, you came through safely."

"Ah! Your Excellency—" Marcelle began, at the thought of all her sorrow and happiness, but she was fain to press her handkerchief to her eyes to drive back her tears.

Frontenac looked at her for a moment as a tender-hearted man looks at a woman weeping; then he said, in a voice of assumed firmness:

"Marcelle, you have been a daughter to my wife and to myself, and often have we blessed God that He sent you to us in place of another. We look upon you as our child, the child of our own blood; and yet, if you wish to leave us you shall, and I will send you back, under escort, to your cabin by Lake Huron, but you will break our hearts if you go."

Marcelle smiled through her tears at His Excellency's kind words.

"You will not desert us, Marcelle. Say not so. Have you not enough fine clothes— " he continued.

"Your Excellency, do not mention fine clothes, I beg," said Marcelle, putting her hands together supplicatingly. "I am ashamed of fine clothes. I am too fond of them, I know. It is a weakness of the coureurs-de-bois."

"Look, Marcelle; my wife is weeping. See what you have done."

One look, and Marcelle threw her arms affectionately around Madame de Frontenac's neck. The two women sobbed for a moment together and then, with an effort, dried their eyes.

As Marcelle handed His Excellency, with trembling hand, a cup of tea, she laughed away the remembrance of her weeping, but there was still in her eyes the shadow of a tear.

"You rogue!" said Frontenac, gaily. "What a fright you gave us. It is worse than the Iroquois. If the English should come in sight in the morning I should view them with indifference in comparison. How did you enjoy your picnic at Beauharnais? You have told me but little of it."

"Very much, Your Excellency."

"Major Beauharnais is very pleasant, and a fine, manly fellow," continued Frontenac.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"He has asked me if it would be with my consent if he paid you his addresses. What think you, Marcelle?"

"I am unworthy of Major Beauharnais, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, quietly.

"I will contradict you, if you will allow me," said Frontenac. "You are worthy of any man. But it is as you say, Marcelle. You know it does not mean that you are compelled to marry him, or even accept his attentions. I shall not permit him to pay you any attention whatever if you do not wish it."

Frontenac expected that this formal and somewhat severe statement of the case would draw a milder reply from Marcelle, but to his astonishment she was silent, nor could she be induced to say anything further.

"Well, you women are a strange and puzzling mixture," said he, at last. "I will leave the settling of this point between you and my wife, and perhaps you will come to some conclusion. I must, you know, not keep the young man in suspense too long. It would be unkind."

"Your Excellency will forgive me," said Marcelle, sadly, "but I have not thought of love."

"Then you are a fortunate and an unfortunate girl," said Frontenac. "But do you not think the seignory of Beauharnais and the heart of its future owner sufficient payment for a little love?"

"I cannot say, Your Excellency. I have not thought of being the wife of any man—unless—"

"Unless?" said Frontenac.

"Unless it might be—"

"Unless it might be?" he repeated, remorselessly.

"The Huron," exclaimed Marcelle, the words forcing themselves through her tightened lips.

Frontenac and his wife looked at her in blank amazement. "Do you mean the Indian you so often spoke of?" asked Madame de Frontenac, incredulously.

"Yes," said Marcelle, timidly.

"Do you think of him so?"

"Not now, Your Excellency," replied Marcelle, half frightened at the coldness of their voices.

"Then, we need not discuss him further, Marcelle," said His Excellency, relieved. "It would be a silly thing to throw aside the earldom of Beauharnais for a poor Huron chief. Think over this, my dear child, and ask my wife's advice, which she will gladly give you. Are you not fortunate in being beloved of such a man?"

Frontenac was not a little piqued that Marcelle should have shown so much reserve in her affection. Of imperious will, he was not accustomed to be opposed in anything, even by those whom he cherished most affection for. At the conclusion of this painful interview with His Excellency Marcelle withdrew to her private apartments and gave way to gloomy forebodings. It would be hard to give up all the happiness she enjoyed at Quebec, where fortune, who had almost proved unkind, had ended by fulfilling her dearest wishes. Involuntarily she took up the ends of her neckerchief in her fingers and felt the fineness of its quality—her dress, too, that had

succeeded her skirt of fringed leather and her leggings. Instead of a head-dress wound about with buckskin strips and ornamented with the stained quills of the porcupine, she was provided with hats of soft, rich velvet and of graceful outline, with plumes and ribbons in them such as she had never seen before. Then, too, upon her fingers rings that sparkled like the dew upon the grass; jewels in her hair that would have made the night-owl hide his eyes and turn green with shame and envy. Could she go back to the ways of the wilderness, its leathern dress, jewels of agate picked from the nearest stream, with none to admire? If she could but get the image of the stately Huron, whose handsome face and haughty carriage had so impressed her, and who had not been excelled —nay, had not been equalled, by the most pretentious of the courtiers of Quebec—if she could but get his image out of her mind, the world of honor and fine clothes, of love and splendor, would lie at her feet. She grew angry with the Huron when she thought of all this self-denial on his account and tossed her head with annoyance and regret. Had not the Huron, too, on more than one occasion chided her? Then, too, why had he not come to Quebec in quest of her if he loved her? Had he dared to forget her? Her heart beat nervously at the thought, and yet she had told His Excellency that she had never been in love.

The Count de Beauharnais was an old and influential friend of Frontenac who, in the days of the recall, when the shadow of diplomatic death enveloped him, had stood gallantly by him and had written to the

King on his behalf, even at the risk of incurring His Majesty's anger and resentment. Frontenac was a man not likely to forget his friends. That he should befriend Beauharnais's son was, therefore, natural, and he was strongly inclined to make his befriending effective.

"She seems unaware of what it is that is being offered her," said Frontenac, by way of explanation, when Major Beauharnais appeared for the promised answer.

"Is she unwilling, then, to consider my addresses?" asked Beauharnais, reddening with mortification and astonishment.

"My wife and I have questioned her, but all she will say in reply is that she is grateful for what we have done for her, and that she does not know what it is to be in love."

"Did she say nothing of the Huron, Your Excellency?"

"That she did, Beauharnais, but I dismissed the idea promptly. It was, I said, not for her to compare the heir to the County of Beauharnais with an Indian. Much as I love her, I cannot have my friends insulted."

"Had I, then, better give up all idea of it, Your Excellency?"

"Do you love her?" asked Frontenac.

"With all mysoul!" replied Beauharnais, fervently.

"Well, then, Beauharnais, you shall have her. Women, you know, are peculiar, and must sometimes be humored out of their unreasonableness. If you

pursue them, they flee; if left alone, they will return. I shall not allow Marcelle to make a mere convenience of her life with us. I have kept and clothed her, talked to her and humored her, not to be met by ingratitude, I assure you. Yet she is not ungrateful. I do not know what my wife would ever do without her. She is unselfish, loving and kind, and sings so sweetly. There is a strangeness about her, too—a strangeness, a sort of shyness of the forest. What will become of her I know not, unless she marry well. Some day she may disappear just as she appeared. It was a strange coming and may be a strange going; but yet in points of honor she surpasses any of the ladies of the court. Neither lie nor any word of deceit has marred her conduct. She goes to mass and fasts with regularity, as all women should, but there is a haunting mystery in her eyes that I cannot explain, and yet sometimes it fascinates me. To my wife she reveals nothing beyond a few words of Black John or of the Huron, who seems in truth to have been a sort of playmate of her youth. Do you intend to rejoin your regiment in France?"

"No, Your Excellency; I am desirous of remaining here. My father, in the ordinary course of nature, cannot long survive, and is anxious that I shall be near him. If I could get an appointment upon Your Excellency's staff—"

"That you shall," said Frontenac, promptly. "Since the death of Nicole I have been without an aide-de-camp, chiefly because I could not get one whom I could trust to do my bidding and keep his own

counsel. If you resign I will give you that appointment. It is necessary, too, that the position of the noblesse here should be strengthened. It is, as you know, in accordance with the King's wishes."

"I am most grateful to Your Excellency," said Beauharnais, "and shall tell my father how much you have done for us."

"Was it 'Nicomède' or 'Mithridate' you took part in last?" asked Frontenac, coming to a subject of greater interest to himself.

"It was 'Nicomède,' Your Excellency."

"Have you thought of another?"

"No, Your Excellency; not since—"

"Not since 'Le Tartuffe' and Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier?" interrupted Frontenac, laughing.

"No, Your Excellency."

"Would you not like to enliven us with another? I do not think the Bishop will bother us again. Besides, I have reasons for wishing to assert the King's supremacy; but of this you will say nothing. It is a small affair and of trifling moment, but it is important that the civil power should be predominant. Have you thought of a play?"

"No, Your Excellency. It did not occur to me that you would care to be disturbed; but then—"

"Yes, I wish it. Then there is none to match Marcelle as a heroine," and Frontenac smiled. "If we can prevail upon our enemies to leave us in peace the country will prosper, and it is not bad diplomacy to let the plague of Boston see that we hold them in such contempt that we can amuse ourselves despite their

threatenings and intrigues. Madame Bernard-Pallu asks me constantly how the Iroquois plan and carry out their raids. To create a play of such material can give no offence and yet do much to justify our actions. Monsieur de Champigny himself, though inclined to quarrel and to side with Monseigneur, would I am convinced, be happy to lend his aid for such a purpose, for more than once the minister has questioned the necessity of his expenditure, hinting that it were better for him to give out law than money. His Majesty in his last letter asked why, since he was appointed to receive, that he did not receive more. Here, then, is his chance to show that the payment of thirty companies of French soldiers is not a pastime but a necessity. You can get Duchesneau, Aillebout, Repentigny, Tilly, Langlois, St. Just, La Montagne and the rest, to help you. We are bound together, you and I, by motives of gratitude and self-interest. Let us see to it that the alliance prove effective."

Beauharnais bowed and withdrew. "This, then," he thought, "is what His Excellency means. I am to see to it that he has his will by the acting of another play. He will see that I shall be rewarded by the hand of Marcelle. Yes, Monsieur le Gouveneur, if you can carry out your bargain, I will carry out mine. Let us see if the success be equal."

CHAPTER XVII.

It was nearly nine o'clock in the morning, at the residence of M. Levesconté, in the Rue Anne, before his three daughters had finished sipping their coffee and attiring themselves. It was the custom in Quebec in those days for the young ladies of the household to spend their mornings at the upper windows fronting upon the street, and for the young gentlemen of the gayer sort to promenade with a view to seeing them. The three daughters of the Levesconté household were anxious to get married, and had set their minds to that end, ignoring the more useful and profitable pursuit of doing the family spinning, which they left to their economical and industrious mother. They were pretty enough, but their spirit of industry, such as it was, went no further than dancing, of which they were inordinately fond. Of the two hours set apart for dressing one was devoted solely to the hair and its ornamentation. Rolled into a lofty and extended coiffure, which was pierced with shining arrows and bedecked with aigrettes, it was at once a product of energy and the centre of attraction. Not, indeed, that the full skirts and beaded bodices of somewhat startling, but nevertheless artistic colors, did not attract a large share of admiration, but simply that the figures of the ladies, differing very little in

their form or size and being moulded and attired upon a somewhat similar scale, the attention of beaux and the envy of rivals was more particularly centred upon the head and its dress, and therefore of it one must speak with due regard to its importance and effect.

Delphine was the youngest. She spent a very large portion of her time in admiring herself, and it was, perhaps, as well that she did so, since greater leisure would have but given her greater opportunity for gossip, which was a vice to which she was naturally addicted.

"Narcisse Bellefeuille says that if the ship arrives from France the ball at the Château will take place a fortnight from yesterday," said Marianne, the second daughter and the beauty of the family.

"Has he asked you to dance already?" asked Delphine, sneeringly, for she was in love with Narcisse.

"Dear me! How jealous you are!" remarked Marianne, casually. "No; he did not ask me to dance, but he asked me if I was to be there."

"And what did you tell him?"

"Tra-la-la!" trilled Marianne, pretending not to hear. "The Schmidts will be over to tea this afternoon."

"Well, then, I am going out," cried Delphine. "Marie Schmidt comes over here for no other reason in the world than to copy my dresses."

Judithe, the eldest, and Marianne gasped at this announcement.

"And the aigrette, too?" asked Judithe.

"Yes; and the aigrette, too," replied Delphine, saucily; "but that is nothing. I have heard something about the Schmidts, and about some other people, as well. Marcelle is to dance with Major Beauharnais, and she is to be married to him in September."

"It is false—a mere piece of gossip!" said Marianne, turning as white as paper.

"Is it, indeed?" cried Delphine, triumphantly. "You will see. Do you think that he would have paid her all the attention at Beauharnais, when he didn't so much as look at anybody else, if there had not been something in it?"

"Then you don't really know. I knew that you were merely gossiping; but I will tell you something that will make you think twice, my dear. Marie Schmidt received a present from Narcisse Bellefeuille."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Delphine, mockingly. "What is that to me? I heard Captain St. Just say, myself, that Marcelle was the most beautiful woman in the world."

"St. Just!" drawled Marianne, derisively. "The man with the bald head?"

"It is all very well for you to laugh at him, but it was his father who owned the slaves. No other man in Canada owns slaves beside Captain St. Just's father."

"They do," asserted Marianne.

"Who?"

"Monsieur de Bonport has one who was brought

here last year from the South. He came in a ship. Here is Narcisse now. Is that you, Narcisse?" It was Delphine who spoke.

"Yes, it is I. I just came to tell you something." Narcisse stood at the foot of the stair.

"About the ball?"

"No—about Marcelle."

"Mon dieu! What is it?"

"She is to marry Major Beauharnais."

"Truly?"

"Yes; Her Excellency has announced it."

Marianne fell over in a half-faint against the wall.

"What do you think of that?" continued Narcisse.

"He ought to marry a lady. But, then, he is not married yet. It may not be true," said Delphine. "Where are you going this afternoon?"

"Oh, I am going out to hear the band with Marie Schmidt," said Narcisse, quietly, as if it made no matter. Then he took his departure and slammed the street door after him.

"He is a nasty gossiping fool," said Judithe, as she looked up from her needle at Marianne, who had but partially recovered from the shock. "When the ball comes off you will be the belle, Marianne. You are far more beautiful than she is, and Major Beauharnais will see it, too. You shall have my diamond ring, but do not show him that you care for him."

"Eh?"

"Ignore him. Just be pleasant and polite to him, but not confidential. Reserve the little confidences for someone else, but if he shows signs of coming round accept his attentions. Then, when he is gone,

accept or pretend to accept the attentions of, say, Jean Boisaille."

"I couldn't," protested Marianne.

"Well, if you do not want Philippe Beauharnais to fall in love with you then don't do as I say."

Marianne looked disconsolate.

"If you laugh at a man up to a certain point it nettles him and spurs him on, but if you tease him too much it makes him angry." Judithe delivered this good advice with the air of a dowager of thirty years' standing. Delphine stood stock still before the mirror and listened to it all intently. She was revolving in her mind a plan to punish Narcisse Bellefeuille.

"He will dare to go with Marie Schmidt?" and Delphine's eyes flashed wickedly.

Madame Levesconté was a woman of ample proportions, no longer pretty, but of homely good sense. She was very fond of her daughters, but nevertheless found them a source of great anxiety. The prevailing fashion of elaborate dresses, bought even from the modistes of Paris; of morning calls that resembled *petites levées* rather than the visits of the daughter of a candle-maker to the daughter of a poor country gentleman who visited Quebec in winter at an expense which left him a beggar the remainder of the year; of promenades upon the parade, of balls at the Château and at the Hôtel de Ville, and of private parties of almost equal magnificence, together with the trials of match-making, wore upon her nerves to an alarming extent. Sometimes she was compelled to resort to the stimulant of smelling-salts, which she kept in a

pint bottle, stopped with a cork stopper wrapped with paper to make it air-tight. On ceremonial occasions Delphine was bottle-holder, but she would in no way allow her mother to make use of such a vulgar and unsightly thing at critical moments.

Madame Levesconté left her spinning, which she had been at since seven o'clock, and took a look at the candles in the cellar to see if they were hardening evenly. Then she trudged wearily up the main stairway to rouse her daughters from their indolence.

"Delphine, you haven't swept the pantry," she sighed, as she reached the top of the stairs, breathing hard.

"It is Judithe's turn," snapped Delphine. "Anyhow I am going to the parade this afternoon and have not time."

"Narcisse Bellefeuille was here just now," said Judithe, laughing, "and has made Delphine jealous."

Delphine's black eyes gleamed with rage.

"Delphine, my child, you must sweep the pantry to-day," said her mother, firmly.

"But my grey dress is—"

"I cannot help it."

"I will sweep it," intervened Marianne.

"Will you?" said Delphine, imploringly.

"Yes; I do not care to go to the parade to-day."

"Then I will tell you all about Philippe Beauharnais and if he walks with Marcelle. Will you lend me your new wrap?"

"You don't need it. It is warm."

"Yes, I may need it, and it will make Marie Schmidt look foolish."

Just then there was a sound that made the windows tremble. It was the gun at the Citadel announcing the sighting of the ship from France.

In a twinkling the three girls had bounded up the attic stair and were peering through the little window at the white-sailed ship from France, which had arrived with wives for the peasants of the seignories and husbands for the ladies of Quebec. While young French women were shipped to New France in this way for the benefit of the habitants, the young gentlemen to whom we refer came all unknowingly, and of their own free-will, moved by a spirit of adventure and the romantic tales of travellers and explorers. Not a few of these young sprigs of French society lost their hearts to the fair damsels of Quebec and marrying, settled down to a life of colonial independence. It was a complaint of the ladies of Montreal that they got but second choice, and, as a consequence, they were by no means pleased. One would have thought that in a country of sudden wealth and freedom of life husbands would have been more easily procurable than wives. Such, indeed, was the fact, as we have seen in the case of the peasantry; but this expectation did not apply to higher social conditions, since the sons of the noblesse were vastly more inclined to become coureurs-de-bois and to lead the wild life of the woods, with its licence and revelry amid plenty and the loveliness of nature, than to settle down to the narrow and stilted existence of poverty and respectability within the walls and palisades of Quebec and Montreal.

The booming of the signal-gun was followed by the

ringing of the bells of Notre Dame and of the Jesuits' Church. But it was hardly necessary that the inhabitants should be further apprised of the ship's arrival, since already the wharf was crowded with people of every sort. There were strange figures of men in leathern leggings and moccasins (although the season was that of summer), whose tangled hair and insolent bearing proclaimed them to be the far-famed coureurs-de-bois; revellers from the city inns who staggered down the streets and lanes leading to the wharves, clerks and bargainers moving about the warehouses, and loafers who seem always to turn up for everything from everywhere. More leisurely and with some show of dignity came the civic officials, clerks of the government offices, and ladies with their escorts. As the ship came within hailing distance she was greeted with repeated cheers, the cheers being accompanied by waving handkerchiefs and other emblems of excessive joy. To these warm and familiar greetings the response from those aboard was equally hearty, testifying that if those ashore were delighted, after the lapse of a long and wintry season, to see the faces of friends from across the sea, the latter were no less delighted to gain sight of a resting-place after two months' tossing in the storms and upon the billows of the Atlantic. The cargo consisted of arms and ammunition, of goods for home consumption and for trade with the Indians, necessaries alike for the protection and profit of those engaged in the defence or the commerce of the country. It can be well imagined also that His Excellency the Governor,

Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier the Bishop, and Monsieur de Champigny the Intendant, saw the unloading of the bag of letters with some concern, since it would contain curt or gracious acknowledgments of the reports and complaints of the King's servants, accordingly as the King and his minister were pleased with their actions and the prospects of the country or otherwise. That there would be severe strictures upon their quarrels each one knew, and probably before the packet had been delivered each had composed his reply in case of censure, with the addition of such new causes of complaint as had arisen in the meantime. Slowly the passengers toiled on their way up the steep streets of the city, except those who had the good fortune to drive in that extraordinary means of conveyance named the calêche, which not remotely resembled the ricksha of Japan, with a horse, however, instead of a man as the chief instrument of torture. Two hundred and twelve passengers had come by this the first ship of the season—seventy peasants or peasants' laborers and their wives, destined to take up land and to add to the glory and profit of the noblesse and to the anxiety of the Governor; thirty women, young and strong, wives for the habitants; seventeen priests, six of whom wore the black robe of the Jesuit order; and ladies and gentlemen of leisure and means who had come hither to visit the people of Quebec, and, so far as the male members of the party were concerned, to explore, to shoot, to fish, and to penetrate the forests, whose extent and beauty, denizens and dangers, had moved their curiosity and roused the spirit of adventure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In a little inn on the upper edge of Lower Town, that looked more like the fortified entrance to a cave than aught else, sat two men. One was a fisherman lately returned from Big Bay, where he had been as guide with several of the officers and civilians of Quebec, who were entertaining their visitors from France with an expedition to salmon water.

"What luck had you?" inquired the landlord, as he rubbed the shining surface of the oaken table.

"We had good luck," replied the fisherman, "so far as fish went, but there'll be the devil to pay with the wood-rangers, and it ain't my fault, for I didn't guide them where the brandy was. They fell on it by accident. I can't explain it, either."

"Who found it?"

"La Montagne."

"Ain't he a blackguard? He has an eye like a fish-hawk, and if there's any brandy goin' he'll be there. But what does it matter so long as they don't know who it is?"

"But they do."

"They do?" incredulously exclaimed the innkeeper.

"Yes, mon dieu! Jean was caught by two soldiers."

"Sacré!" cried the innkeeper, indignantly.

"What will happen?"

"He'll be dangling from the gibbet by night."

The knot of men and women who had gathered where the lane and the alley-way intersected testified to the correctness of the fisherman's surmise as to the excitement in store. Under guard of a file of soldiers and securely pinioned, Jean, the coureur-de-bois, known from Tadousac to Trois Rivières as a daring and successful adventurer and illicit trader, walked smartly towards the meeeting-place of the Conseil Supérieur, which in cases of life and death had alone the required jurisdiction. The large stone building in which the Council met became the centre of popular attraction and excitement. Although there was no disposition to interfere with the law or to attempt the rescue of the prisoner, there was a great deal of sympathy for him, since it was an open secret that everybody engaged in illicit trading who could equip or undertake an expedition. Even in an age of utter recklessness with regard to life it was considered that the penalty of death for infraction of the laws of monopoly was too severe and that it would, if justice had been done, have long since removed from their sphere of usefulness many of the most prominent and distinguished men in the service of the King. Here and there amongst the assembled crowd were scattered friends and relatives of the coureur, who evinced in his bearing and behaviour, however, not the slightest sign of fear or regret.

The council-chamber was a large low-ceiled room lighted by windows so narrow and so small that it was evident that, like all buildings of secure position

within the military limits of the city, it was chiefly intended as a centre of defence in case of attack. At the head of the table sat the Intendant. Thirteen members of the Council were present, Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier alone being absent. A guard of soldiers was stationed behind the chairs of the members, who sat in the form of a semi-circle, His Excellency, and not the Intendant, being the middle point of the arc. All being ready, the prisoner was brought in and made to stand at the foot of the table, pinioned and under guard. Without, soldiers stood in front of the council-house and kept the populace at a respectful distance. The attorney-general, clad as the rest in his official robes, arose and read the charge and statement of the case to His Excellency and honorable members of the Council. It is unnecessary to give the precise form of the legal document, which set out at great length and with inimitable verbiage the long list of crimes which Jean's illicit brandy-selling included in contravention of the statute in that behalf, of the dignity of His Majesty, and it might have been added, to the ruin and demoralization of the Indians, who in their original condition had never known an intoxicant. To the order to plead to the indictment Jean answered nothing. Coureurs-de-bois did not recognize the law as binding them. They were members of that peculiar order or race of people, if they may be so described, for the very reason that they abhorred all law and order, and in the trials which they had undergone before the judicial officers of the King there was no record that they had ever deigned

to recognize the law by pleading to an indictment. As to whether they broke the law or kept it, that was in their opinion no man's business, and to prying eyes or undue interference they were accustomed to make answer with the knife.

During the arraignment of the culprit and the process of his trial a different scene was being enacted at the Château, where a little squaw in strange habiliments had succeeded, after an hour's struggle, in getting a message to Marcelle. Upon the receipt of this communication, and with an instinctive suspicion that something was afoot, Marcelle hastened to her private apartments and had the squaw shown in. Quietly, but with tragic earnestness, the old woman told Marcelle how Jean Dilbot was her only and much loved son and that it was he who had saved her from the clutches of Latour.

"If it is in my power Jean's life shall be spared," exclaimed Marcelle, snatching up her cloak and hood and starting out in all haste in search of aid. Walking quickly and revolving in her mind possible schemes of securing help, she turned into the Rue Richelieu and knocked at the door of the office of the superintendent of military stores. He was an old man, the superintendent, who had been retired from a superior office some years before, but being of use and experience his services had been retained in their present capacity.

"Demoiselle Marcelle," he exclaimed, with pleasure, as his unexpected visitor was shown in, and then, observing her affliction, "Why, my child, you are in deep distress. What can it be?"

"Ah! Monsieur Henri, I am truly in deep distress, and I know not where to turn if not to you who have so often befriended me."

Marcelle then detailed to him with all possible speed the arrest of Jean, the appeal of his mother, the fact of her own rescue, and the absence of Frontenac from the Château.

"But he is at the Council-board," said Monsieur Henri; "can you not see him there?"

"But I could not go there alone," said Marcelle, "His Excellency would be offended."

"No, but I can go with you, and I shall," saying which the old man snatched up his hat and cloak and accompanied her.

"Could you not have spoken to Her Excellency?" inquired Monsieur Henri, as they hurried along.

"She has not risen," replied Marcelle.

As they turned into the Rue Richelieu the crowd near the council-house and the guard of soldiers proclaimed the nature of the proceedings going on within.

Marcelle's heart beat fast. "There is Captain St. Just," she said, as she came in sight of that officer standing at the entrance.

"You will let us in?" she asked, calmly.

"Yes, demoiselle, but it will be necessary for me first to apprise His Excellency and get his permission."

"Then make haste, I beseech you."

St. Just hurried away to do her bidding.

"He will see you. His Excellency is coming himself," said he, returning.

Presently Frontenac appeared, but with a shadow

of displeasure upon his face. The evidence has been taken and he had been about to deliver sentence when interrupted.

"What would you have with me, Marcelle? Is aught gone ill at the Château?" asked he, somewhat sternly.

"No, Your Excellency, all is well there, and I implore Your Excellency's pardon, but is the man on trial Jean the coureur?" Without replying Frontenac called her within, out of hearing of the soldiers.

"What do you seek with me, Marcelle? It is Jean—Jean Dilbot, the coureur-de-bois—whom I am about to condemn to death."

Marcelle shuddered visibly at the announcement. "It was he, Your Excellency, who rescued me from Monsieur Latour."

"What!" exclaimed Frontenac, in amazement, "this man?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, if this be Jean. I could more surely tell if I could see him."

Frontenac's face relaxed its sternness while he considered.

"You shall see him," he said. "Come with me."

Frontenac preceded her into the council-chamber. "Is that the man?" he asked, as she came within view of the coureur.

Marcelle clasped her hands involuntarily. "Yes, Your Excellency, that is Jean, the man who saved me."

Meanwhile the various members of the Council had turned in wonderment to gaze at the intruder.

"You are sure, Marcelle?" Frontenac repeated, earnestly.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Then he shall not die," said he, quickly.

A place near the table was found for Marcelle by Frontenac's direction, and then, resuming his position as about to deliver the sentence of the Council, he spoke as follows:

"Monsieur Intendant and gentlemen of the Council: You are aware that the result of our deliberations has been to find the prisoner Jean Dilbot guilty of violation of the statute of His Majesty under which he has been duly arraigned. You are also aware that the exercise of the prerogative of pardon lies in my hands as representative of His Majesty. Within an hour the formalities subsequent to our finding would have included the sentencing by me of the said Jean Dilbot, the prisoner at the bar, but—" and here Frontenac paused, looking first at Marcelle and then at the prisoner,—"I am informed by Marcelle Courtebois, one of the ladies of my court, that it was he who, at the time of the illegal and improper action of Monsieur Latour, did rescue her from illegal detention and conduct her in safety to the Convent of the Ursulines. Further, you will remember that at the trial of the said Monsieur Latour this man was absent, having departed from the city and being beyond the cognizance of the officers of this court then despatched in quest of him; that the trial had to be conducted without his testimony; and that in the absence of so material a witness a lenient view was taken of the accused's case, to the end that he was acquitted of wrong intent and liberated. It was not my purpose,

nor is it within our power to re-open the charge against Monsieur Latour without appeal to the Court of proper jurisdiction at Paris, but it is within my power to defer indefinitely, or till such time as I, representing His Majesty, shall see fit, the sentence adjudged against the prisoner at the bar, and in pursuance of this, my determination and privilege, I direct the clerk to register my order to that effect, and I hereby declare this prisoner at liberty until such time as he shall further be called on to appear for sentence."

Frontenac resumed his seat amid profound silence. The clerk registered the decree as ordered, and Jean Dilbot was freed from his bonds and set at liberty. With the impression of the solemnity of the proceedings still upon him, and of his narrow escape from death, as he passed Marcelle, Jean knelt at her feet and taking the tips of her fingers reverently in his he kissed them tenderly, accompanying the action with a few whispered words, but one of which Marcelle caught, "coureur-de-bois."

The court having been declared adjourned after this dramatic and somewhat abrupt termination of its proceedings, Frontenac withdrew with Marcelle and Monsieur Henri into the adjoining apartment, which served the double purpose of consultation and robing-room. There they waited till His Excellency's carriage arrived, when they took their departure, accompanied by the guard, which on all formal occasions such as this kept safe the person and dignity of the representative of His Majesty in Canada.

The extraordinary nature of the proceedings soon became noised abroad, and the crowds in the street, drawn together for gossip and the gratification of their idle curiosity, lifted their caps and cheered the Governor and Marcelle lustily. The trial and the deferring of the sentence for reasons foreign to the case was to the public a matter of extraordinary importance, since no similar instance up to that time had been recorded in the annals of the court. But in order that his leniency on this occasion might not be mistaken for a relaxing of the severity of the law against illicit trading, Frontenac directed the heralds of the court to proclaim from the steps of the council-chamber the intention of the Council to extend the right of the Crown to search upon suspicion, and further, to have the proclamation in writing affixed to the door of the council-chamber for one week from the date of the proclamation itself.

"Did you not recognize Dilbot?" asked La Montagne of St. Just.

"Yes."

"Why did you yourself not speak to His Excellency then?"

"My dear superior officer, I never volunteer information."

"That is diplomacy, I suppose. Ah, I see. It may hang you yet"; and La Montagne extended himself with supreme satisfaction.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE Duke de Vautreuil was a young nobleman of France. The Court of Versailles, filled with the beauty and wit of the kingdom, was the centre of political and social intrigue. There was yet another passion, however, than that of conniving for place and power, and one that excited a still stronger influence upon the members of the court—that master passion of the human heart, love. The example set in this regard was not less potent. The King himself, great in matters of state, was not less so in affairs of love. He had been credited with saying that women were the agents of the devil, and for this reason, if for no other, he evinced a desire to win their favor. The Duke de Vautreuil was, as we have said, young. He had come into his dukedom early in life, and being altogether a most desirable party, it was not long till he had attracted the attention of many ladies of the French Court. However, as often happens, his eyes wandered farther than the throng about him, and chanced to fall upon the exquisite person of Julienne de l'Ampére. This lady of beauty, but of little else, attracted about the same time the notice of an even more exalted personage. To the suit of the young duke the lady at first lent a willing ear, but flattered by the notice of the King himself, her attention became so distracted

that, in the end, the duke grew first of all despondent, then critical, and then furious. He vowed, however, that the perfidy of woman should never drive him to despair and that he would travel abroad in search of a happiness which Julienne de l'Ampére denied him. Perhaps, too, in his wanderings he might acquire fame as well, and to win fame was the chief ambition of the young men of the court of Louis, since royal rewards of rank and fortune were bestowed only upon those who had done something to enhance the glory which they wished to share, and hence it was that in course of time the fame of great deeds became the passport to promotion. Aristocratic birth and title did not of themselves suffice to secure the favor of the King, who knew well how to curb the aspirations of parasites who sought to live within the splendor of a throne which they had done nothing to create. The policy of the King was adopted by the ladies of the court, who bade suitors for their hands gain their favor by travel and adventure, as in the days of chivalry. Perhaps, therefore, by the time of his return the lady in question would be glad to listen to him, and with this idea, as well as that of seeking relief from the sufferings of his heart, the young duke resolved to venture far afield. Preparations for his departure were immediately undertaken. His promised "adventure" became the topic of the hour. The gossips affirmed that he was about to visit the continent of America, the vast domain of the King beyond sea, where the hated English and their allies, the barbarous red men, were attempting to withstand

the soldiers of France, and where the product of the mine, of the forest, and of the chase were so great that fortunes incalculable awaited those who had the hardihood to dare the dangers of warfare and of the deep to gain them. As on other occasions, both the peril and the profits were greatly magnified, although what would seem paltry in these days was still vast enough in the time of Louis XIV. to attract, not only the attention but the wonderment of Europe. Twenty men-at-arms, with pike and arquebuse, breastplate and helmet, formed the duke's guard. Arms, accoutrements and ammunition for a larger force and a long stay were shipped in advance to Quebec. So ample were the preparations, and so general the applause, that the King himself gave the expedition his royal blessing, in addition to that already given by the Cardinal.

Amid the cheers of the populace, the envy of his friends, and the tears of the fearful, the duke sailed from St. Malo for the capital of New France. After a stormy and prolonged voyage he reached it safely. His arrival was attended with the usual sensational features of great events, but he had no time to waste in the trifles of provincial society. Without consulting the Governor-General further than to present his credentials for countersignature; without asking his advice or that of the Intendant or of any of the officers of state, and without delay, he took his departure for the interior of the continent, to encounter an experience which he was not likely soon to forget. The passport of the King opened all official gateways to his progress,

and as he disappeared in the distance with his canoes, his guides and his men-at-arms in all the splendor of so great an undertaking, Frontenac would have smiled with contempt had it not been that he knew but too well that in due course it would be his unpleasant task to account to the King for the disappearance of the illustrious "adventurer." Montreal was reached and left behind with even less consideration than Quebec had been, and the long and arduous voyage up the Ottawa begun. A few roving red men viewed the imposing expedition with anxious and covetous eye, but beyond frightening the duke by their sudden appearance and re-appearance into the belief that he was in danger of being overwhelmed by numbers, no incident occurred worthy of note, and Carillon was reached without mishap. His guides, the chief of whom was Big Pierre, the signalman from Pointeau Pic, were alive to the wishes and requirements of their wealthy employer, and while they obeyed to the letter the secret instructions of His Excellency that they were not to run the duke into unnecessary danger, they made his experience interesting for him and entertaining for themselves. This task was made the easier by the departure of the Iroquois from their usual place of combat, they having gone west to attack the Ottawas, who had lately captured and burned a Mohawk. Having spent the winter in hunting and trapping and in stalking the red men—for, as we have said, a few still roamed in the neighborhood—the duke returned with the floods of spring and worked his way back to the city of Quebec. Delighted with the

adventure, he was all good-humor, and calling up his skipper, he deferred his sailing that he might enjoy life for a time at the city as well. Frontenac had invited him, with much flourish of compliment, to wait for the most important of the annual functions, the state ball, soon to take place; not, however, without guile on the part of His Excellency, who hoped that having escaped the perils of flood and forest, and being in the best of humor with himself and the country generally, the duke would go back to France and report to the King favorably of what he had seen.

All Quebec was now astir, not only in anticipation of the festivity for which, indeed, it had been long preparing, but because of the duke's promised appearance, the additional *éclat* exciting the ladies to the utmost and giving no little concern to the men. There was nothing further in the way of new clothes to come from Paris. It merely resolved itself, therefore, into the making over, more splendidly, of the material at hand, and this, in itself, was a matter of interest. The afternoon concerts of the band became the rendezvous more than ever of the youth and beauty of the town. Not all the efforts, however, of the industrious, or of the lovely, could enable them to rival the favorite of the Governor in the eyes of the duke. Marcelle knew that it was Frontenac's wish that she should make herself agreeable to him, and without incurring the odium of forwardness, she found a way not only so to do, but to her astonishment and dismay, to win his profound admiration as well. Having gone too far, it now became a matter of difficulty to recede without

sacrificing those interests which she had been so anxious to protect. Morning walks, afternoon promenades, dinners at the Château, and evenings devoted to music, all in company with Marcelle, made the duke's holiday a dream of pleasure and gave him serious thought of postponing his departure indefinitely. To all the advances of love-making, however, Marcelle was obdurate and cold, and as the time of his return to France drew nearer his attentions redoubled.

The ball was an unqualified success. Officers and civilians, mothers and daughters, old and young, all alike presented themselves to their Excellencies and their guest, looking their best and happiest. To the usual excitement of a ball-room was added the gossip of the envious, who beheld with chagrin Marcelle's unwished-for triumph. In order that she might not be thought to have dressed more splendidly or more becomingly than usual out of deference to the presence of the duke, Marcelle omitted certain features of ornament, such as her finest jewels, so that, if possible she might be suspected of no design upon the stranger, while still maintaining, however, the dignity and the duty of her position. But as if to mock at her ineffectual efforts, nature had endowed her with a more glowing and perfect loveliness than usual, and it was plain to the eye of so experienced a diplomat as Frontenac that there was trouble ahead for both Marcelle and himself. The jealousy of the ladies Frontenac could easily master and subdue, but the devotion of the duke and the undisguised irritation of Beauharnais were two things not so easy of adjust-

ment. He had escaped for a moment from the heat and bustle of the ball-room and was standing in the moonlight upon the long balcony, that commanded a view of unrivalled magnitude and beauty. There was a step behind him.

"Marcelle!" he exclaimed, as she came towards him.

"Yes, Your Excellency; it is I," Marcelle answered, softly. "I have come to ask your permission—"

"To do what?"

"To leave Quebec and to go back to the little cabin in the forest."

"Nonsense, Marcelle," said Frontenac, impatiently, regarding the request as a renewal of her freak of fancy, inspired by the excitement of the occasion.

"But I am serious, Your Excellency. He has proposed."

"Who? The duke?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Why did you let him go so far, Marcelle," said Frontenac, gently, "when you are already engaged to Major Beauharnais?"

"I could not help it, Your Excellency," pleaded Marcelle, shyly, and yet conscious of the justice of at least part of Frontenac's rebuke.

Frontenac half turned away and looked into space. "What did you say when he spoke to you?"

"I referred him to Your Excellency."

"Do you love him?" asked Frontenac.

"No, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, quickly.

"You must delay, then," said Frontenac, reflectively. "Tell him you will let him know by letter."

"But he says that he will not go until he knows my answer," said Marcelle.

"Then I suppose he must know it at once; but it is most unfortunate. Why can't you women manage your love affairs better? Very well, I will speak to him. Send him to me."

Marcelle departed to do as directed, and in another moment the Duke de Vautreuil stood beside Frontenac.

"What is it you wish? Is it as Marcelle has said?"

"Yes, Your Excellency; I love her as my life," replied the duke, fervently.

"Do you know who she is?" inquired Frontenac, suggestively, "and that she is already engaged?"

"It is nothing to me whence she sprang," replied the lover. "I adore her, and know—nay, wish to know—nothing further except that she loves me, and that you will give your consent to our marriage."

"But what of her betrothal?" remonstrated Frontenac, in desperation.

"She could not be betrothed and receive my attention as she has done, Your Excellency. You must be mistaken," replied the duke, triumphantly.

"I will ask her that," said Frontenac, sending for Marcelle, who appeared, trembling with agitation.

"Are you not engaged to Major Beauharnais, Marcelle?" asked Frontenac, bluntly.

"No, Your Excellency," she replied; "but I beg Your Excellency will not be angry with me. I implore—"

"Enough, Marcelle; I wished to know the truth. Be not afraid of my displeasure. You may return to the ball-room."

"You are not aware, then, of the circumstances of her birth?" resumed Frontenac, endeavoring to gain time.

"No, Your Excellency; nor do I care."

"But you are young."

"Not too young to love."

"Nay, but the King—"

"I am my own master," said the duke, firmly.

"Does the girl love you?" asked Frontenac, still looking for a way of escape.

"I have asked her and she withholds her answer—a good sign, Your Excellency."

"Not always," said Frontenac, drily, and loth to recall his promise to Beauharnais. "But I must consult her more at leisure."

"At Your Excellency's pleasure."

"Meantime we will have a glass of wine," said Frontenac, in which command the duke silently but reluctantly acquiesced.

How glorious was the trembling brilliance of the moon upon the water! The charm of the summer night, the softness of the air, the muffled sounds that came creeping soothingly upward from the city and from the river below, the bewildering strains of music within—how these would have made the passing hour a glimpse of heaven for the duke if Marcelle and Frontenac had spoken but one word of assurance or consent.

At last the music ceased, almost as the declining moon met the dawning of another day. The guests assembled to say "good-night." Marcelle had already

gone to her own apartments, where, seated at the window, she awaited their departure. When Frontenac and all the inhabitants of the Château had gone to rest, and the stillness of sleep had fallen upon the scene of so much laughter and rejoicing, Marcelle crept softly out upon the balcony to gaze upon the dying moon.

"Is all this pomp," she thought, "this music, this love-making, the answer to the yearning of my heart? Or should I be happier with the Huron far in the forest by the great lake of the Manitou, where the wind in the tree-tops lulls me to sleep, and the merry singing of birds awakens me again?"

CHAPTER XX.

About the time that Marcelle had reached the conclusion of her philosophizing a boat was being rowed rapidly across the river to Point Levis, opposite, in which were five persons, in addition to the boatman, all bent upon a serious errand.

We have mentioned that the heir of Beauharnais was in a rage over the attentions of the Duke de Vautreuil to Marcelle. Instead of seeking out the lady, however, and asking her for some sort of explanation—which, in this case, would have been doubtless quite to his satisfaction—he decided to proceed in a different way in order to accomplish, if possible, two things at once, viz.: the answer to the question, and the death of the questioned. Philippe Beauharnais had gone to the ball, as in duty bound, but in a disturbed and unhappy state of mind, and being still further disturbed by the attentions of the duke, he had, on one of the weak pleas of a lover, retired at an early hour to sharpen his sword and await developments. Wrapped in his cloak, he had stood within the shadow of the Château for a considerable time before the ball had come to a conclusion and the guests had begun to depart. At last the Duke de Vautreuil, who for the occasion was established in quarters near by, came out in company with others and was proceeding on

his way. Beauharnais suddenly stepped forward and tapped him peremptorily on the shoulder.

"I wish to speak with you," he said.

The duke drew his sword and made ready to defend himself, but the others, amongst whom were La Montagne and St. Just, recognizing the voice of Beauharnais, immediately spoke up and greeted him by name. This disarmed the suspicions of the duke, who sheathed his sword and stood waiting.

"I wish to speak with you in private," repeated Beauharnais, with such an air of seriousness that the duke without more ado withdrew to one side with him.

"Well, what is it?" asked he.

"You know that Marcelle Courtebois is betrothed to me," said Beauharnais, in a tone half questioning, half informing.

"I know nothing of the sort," replied the duke, emphatically.

"But the fact is—" began Beauharnais.

"The fact is that I heard her deny the statement—"

"You lie!" said Beauharnais, calmly.

In an instant swords were out, and they were at it. The others now rushed in and begged them to desist, parting their weapons with their own, and forcing them back when mere words were of no avail.

"I beg Your Grace to remember that we are responsible to His Excellency for your welfare," said Major La Montagne, in an agitated manner.

"You!" cried the Duke. "Who the devil are you? No man is responsible for me but myself. I demand satisfaction upon the field of honor—if, indeed, you Quebeckers are aware of such a thing."

The effect of this declaration was to deeply incense the duke's Canadian companions, who felt that they deserved no such slur. Notwithstanding, therefore, the anger of His Excellency, should he know of their so doing, and the punishment which they well knew would follow their abetting and assisting these two men to fight a duel, La Montagne and St. Just consented to provide a boat to take them to a scene of action, together with the seconds, the surgeon, and whatever else might be necessary.

"Whom do you wish for your second?" inquired La Montagne of the duke, somewhat haughtily.

"None," said he; "I shall be my own second."

Taking this to be intended as a still further insult, La Montagne and St. Just said no more, but led the way to the wharf as rapidly as possible, in order that they might cross while still the shadow of the hills lay upon the surface of the river. A boat was easily procured, but some little delay was experienced in securing the services of a surgeon. However, at length one was secured, and the party embarked without further delay. With the exception of an order to the helmsman to keep up stream as far as possible, to avoid the village of Levis, the journey across was made in silence. Two of the party were resolved upon death, while the others hesitated between a desire for revenge upon the duke and a nervous dread

of Frontenac's anger, and perhaps the anger of the King

"What do you think of this affair?" asked La Montagne of St. Just, as they neared the other shore, in a low voice inaudible except to themselves.

"I hope Beauharnais will stick him," replied St. Just, briefly.

"Nay, I do not mean that. If all were clear for fighting I should hope so, too, but His Excellency—"

"It is Vautreuil's fault. He would have it—"

"Chut!" exclaimed La Montagne, fretfully, "it will be ours if he has it."

"I would give a hundred pistoles—" began St. Just.

"If you had them," suggested his superior officer, with irritation and ill-disguised contempt.

"Yes, let it go on," said St. Just at last, in desperation. "If the worst comes to the worst I will turn coureur-de-bois."

"And leave the rest to me, I suppose," said La Montagne.

"You can do the same."

"I know what I shall do. I shall forbid it before it is too late."

"You shall not," retorted St. Just, emphatically. But a new idea had suddenly occurred to the nervous major. He would appeal to the principals themselves. He coughed, and then began:

"Gentlemen: I appeal to you both in the King's name to give up the idea of this duel, which you know is expressly in violation of the decree of His Excellency since the death of the civilian Jean St.

Pierre at the hands of Colonel du Guesclin." He paused to allow his words time to have full effect.

"It is in violation of the decree of a higher power even than his," said the duke, in a scoffing tone.

"The King's?" said La Montagne, eagerly.

"No—God's," replied the duke, dramatically.

La Montagne was nonplussed for the instant at this display of blasphemy, but taking advantage of the opening, resolved to press his point.

"Will you not then desist?" said he.

"Not unless my opponent begs it," sneered the duke.

"Keep silence," roared Beauharnais, in an ungovernable rage, "or the field of honor shall be where you sit, you hound."

The duke instantly drew his sword, but once more the others prevailed upon him to restrain himself till the proper field of combat had been reached.

"It is useless. We cannot prevent it," sighed La Montagne in St. Just's ear.

"No; I will swear to that. Then we are gentlemen, and, as officers of the King, have been insulted. It must go on."

The boat was beached, and the party wound their way up to where the trees hid the village of Levis from view. Then they waited for the dawn, which was not long in coming. The principals threw off their superfluous garments and drew their swords. At a word from La Montagne the combat began. It was apparent at once that the duke was overmatched. Missing a lunge, the sword of his opponent instantly ripped up his sword-arm to the elbow.

La Montagne and St. Just ran forward, but the duke waved them back. He had changed his sword to the other hand, and again stood in position. This time the struggle began without the usual signal, and by dint of a fury that was not to be denied, the Duke succeeded in pressing his sword-point past the guard of his opponent, and in slightly wounding him in the cheek. With the rage of a lion Beauharnais advanced, and in an instant had run the dauntless Vautreuil through the right shoulder clear to the hilt. The duke fell with a moan and lay bleeding upon the ground.

"Quick, Poirier!" shouted La Montagne, but the surgeon was already there, and, kneeling by the fallen man's side, he poured brandy into his mouth, and then set himself to stop the bleeding. Little was said, every effort being directed to prevent a tragedy.

"It is too late," said Beauharnais, wearily. "He has met the fate that he deserved."

"For God's sake, hush!" said La Montagne. "No more of this. We must get him to the Hôtel Dieu without delay. It is his only hope. His breathing even now is stronger. Is there hope, Poirier?"

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders doubtfully, but continued his efforts to staunch the bleeding. At last he gave the signal, and all four took hold of the wounded man and bore him gently as they would a child down to the boat. They laid him upon a bed made of the cloaks of the others, his head being pillowed upon the arm of St. Just.

"Are you satisfied?" asked La Montagne, sarcastic-

ally, of Beauharnais, as he took a frightened look at the wounded man's pallid face.

"Yes, but not more than satisfied," replied Beauharnais, grimly. He was one of those quiet but revengeful men who mean everything for death when they are wronged.

The boat was run into a little bay on the St. Charles shore. It was evident at a glance that it was useless to attempt the Hôtel Dieu, and a house in Lower Town was selected, where, happily, an usher of the council-chamber was found to live. By dint of care and great labor the wounded man was carried up the rocky face of the shelving cliff leading to the usher's house, and safely deposited there under the superintendence of the surgeon, who watched him narrowly and with a skilful eye. A messenger was then despatched for the priest.

"Pardieu!" exclaimed St. Just, with a mingled feeling of prayer and relief. "I vow a thousand Aves if he recovers."

"Who will tell His Excellency?" asked La Montagne, quietly.

"You, of course," said St. Just.

"But you are the diplomatist; I am nothing."

"This is no time for diplomacy. Your duty—" began St. Just.

"I appoint you," said La Montagne.

"What for?" gasped St. Just, as the possibility flashed upon him.

"To inform His Excellency," said La Montagne, inexorably.

"But I cannot."

"But you must. I insist. I will remain with the duke."

"Mon dieu! What shall I say?" gasped St. Just in despair.

"Say that he was wounded in a duel—" suggested La Montagne.

"In a duel?" cried St. Just, incredulously.

"Yes, and that you were there—"

"And you."

"If you mention my name without instructions I will have you put in the guard-house for forty days," said La Montagne, resolutely.

"But if His Excellency asks?" pleaded St. Just.

"Then come for me. But don't you attempt to involve me in this affair unless he should get well, when I don't mind your saying that I did all I could to stop it."

"And yet you want—"

"Silence!" cried La Montagne, wrathfully.

St. Just was unable to speak for mingled rage and apprehension. He set off on his mission full of misgiving and astonishment.

"This is a pretty trick to play me," he said to himself as he walked along, "when he could have stopped it easily by informing His Excellency; and now he lays the blame upon me, and forbids me to mention his name. Pardieu! It is difficult," and St. Just's eyes glittered maliciously. "Very well, I would sooner have the first word than the last in this case, I can tell you, Major La Montagne, with all your orders."

St. Just approached the Château slowly and in fear of the dreaded eye of Frontenac, which had, it was supposed, the gift of looking through and through. The servant informed him that His Excellency was taking coffee with the ladies. Here was a respite. But at last he grew impatient to have it over with, and bade his request for an audience be taken in.

"Good morning, Captain St. Just," said Frontenac, cheerfully. "There is nothing of unusual importance in so early a visit, I hope."

"There has been a duel, Your Excellency."

Frontenac frowned terribly, and then said simply, "Who have quarrelled?"

"I have been sent by Major La Mont—no, you will pardon my slip, Your Excellency—I have come to announce, as in duty bound to Your Excellency's person and to the King, that His Grace the Duke de Vautreuil, having quarrelled with Major Beauharnais, has fought a duel with him, and has been wounded."

"Badly?"

"Yes, Your Excellency; he lies at the point of death in the house of Simon Legros, one of the ushers of the Council."

"You must conduct me to him at once. This is a serious affair," and without more ado Frontenac donned his hat and cloak and set out.

"Why did you not prevent it?" asked Frontenac, as they hurried away.

"My superior officer was present, Your Excellency."

"La Montagne?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"And did he permit it without protest?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"What was the duel about?"

"Over the duke's attentions to Demoiselle Marcelle."

"Ah! Jealousy. It is too bad."

The wounded man opened his eyes at the sound of Frontenac's voice, but was enjoined to close them again. The surgeon was of opinion that the wound would not prove fatal, but that it would be unwise to move him from his present position.

The priest, one of the Bishop's own household, in view of the hopeful aspect of the case, withdrew upon Frontenac's entrance, which the latter noted with annoyance. Frontenac then directed that a sentry be placed before the door.

"I will see to it, Surgeon, that a relief nurse is sent to you from the Hôtel Dieu, and I myself will return in the morning. Major La Montagne and Captain St. Just, since your presence is not required here, you will accompany me to the Château," and he turned to them with a look full of meaning.

As they turned to follow Frontenac, La Montagne shook his fist wrathfully at St. Just, as a boy does when at school he is caught in some delinquency.

"It is a fortunate thing," said Frontenac, when he had taken a seat in his private apartment at the Château, and had bidden the others to do likewise, in preparation for a review of what had just happened, "that we are not face to face with death as well as with disgrace. As you are aware, I gave strict orders that there should be no more duels amongst loyal subjects"—and he emphasized the word "loyal" sug-

gestively—"of His Majesty. The frequency of their occurrence has done a vast deal to unsettle private and public life in this colony, and has deprived us on more than one occasion of a valuable subject. When I gave those orders I expected them to be obeyed. Why were they disobeyed?"

"It was impossible to prevent this duel, Your Excellency. Major Beauharnais having insulted the Duke de Vautreuil, the latter demanded instant satisfaction," La Montagne replied. He then went on to give full particulars of the quarrel and its unhappy ending.

"Do you wish trial by the usual court-martial, or will you leave your punishment to me?"

The question was abrupt and unexpected, but both cried eagerly, "To Your Excellency."

"Then I direct that you shall remain barrack-bound till further notice, on pain of dismissal from the service."

"And this is your diplomacy," sneered La Montagne, as the two culprits emerged from the Château and walked across the square to their quarters.

"No. It's yours," retorted St. Just.

"You mentioned my name, you scoundrel," said La Montagne.

"No, I did not."

"Who then?"

"His Excellency," said St. Just.

CHAPTER XXI.

In a room in the house of M. de Champigny sat two men, one of them the Intendant himself and the other the Duke de Vautreuil. De Champigny had determined that the haughty behavior of the Count de Frontenac should come to an end. He had written long and frequent letters to the King, which, like those of his rival on the same topic, had been treated with scant courtesy. The quarrel had gradually developed from being merely one between rival officers of the King into a feud between the two men themselves.

The present position of the Duke de Vautreuil was briefly this. He had been apprised from day to day during the period of his convalescence of the trend of events at the Château, and, in addition, of the history of the great quarrel between the Bishop and His Excellency on the one hand, and between the Intendant and His Excellency on the other, which was slumbering at the time merely for the lack of someone to stir the fire. Notwithstanding the attentions of Frontenac, which, however, he construed more as the result of tact than of kindness, he had resolved to take the side of the Bishop and of the Intendant in a prompt and effective manner, since in that way lay the possible winning of Marcelle. His clerical informant had left no doubt in his mind that the Governor was heart and

soul for Beauharnais in whatever might take place with regard to her, and as a consequence, and by reason of his extreme infatuation, he was resolved to gain possession of her or set the colony on fire with renewed strife.

"Then you mean she really belongs to the custody of the Bishop?" said De Vautreuil.

"That is certainly the case. She was in the Ursuline Convent when he sent a messenger who by misrepresentations induced Mother Marie de l'Incarnation to give her up."

"What a dishonorable action!" continued De Vautreuil. "Why has His Lordship not insisted on her restoration?"

"He has been away from Quebec a great deal on a journey through his diocese, and then, you know, the trouble at Montreal takes up much of his time," De Champigny explained.

"There seems to be a conspiracy amongst the people to keep the Bishop occupied so that he shall not interfere with Frontenac."

"There is no conspiracy," replied De Champigny with candor. "It lies with the Bishop himself whether he will risk a combat a l'outrance with the ambitious Governor and usurper of other men's rights, or allow them full sway while he devotes himself to his purely episcopal duties."

"Yet is it not for the welfare of his people that he should check the pride of Frontenac?"

"Yes, truly," said De Champigny, smiling.

"How had it best be done, think you?"

"Stop his interfering with my orders to the habitants, and his spending of money on balls and wicked theatricals, when it is sorely needed for the colonists, who have not seed for the ground nor clothes for their children."

"And is it true that he traffics with the dealers in contraband?" asked the duke.

De Champigny shrugged his shoulders meaningly, but declined to commit himself to so serious a statement.

"In France it is generally supposed that there is only one man in Canada, and that is Frontenac," continued De Vautreuil.

The Intendant smiled contemptuously at this attempt to play upon his jealousy.

"Are you aware that it is Frontenac's intention to have another play?" said De Vautreuil.

"You had better tell that to His Lordship. Play or no play, it concerns me very little," replied De Champigny.

"But you would support me in a renewal of the agitation if the Bishop can be induced to take it up."

"I will do everything in my power to curb vice-regal extravagance and interference."

Convinced that it was useless to parley further with De Champigny, who was clearly willing but afraid, De Vautreuil took the hint and visited Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, who, as guileless as he was ardent in the service of the Church, received his visitor without suspicion.

De Vautreuil being admitted to the presence of His

Lordship, although still sore from the effect of his wound, knelt with profound devotion.

"Your Lordship is aware that I have been lately attacked by the minions of Frontenac, who, knowing that I would carry back to France a true report of the low and scandalous behavior of the Governor, and of those about him, insulted me, and by a conspiracy sought my life."

"I was aware that Your Grace had been wounded, and had recovered so far as to leave your room, but by whom, and under what circumstances, I did not know," said the Bishop, earnestly. "There can be no doubt, however, that your desire to vindicate the Church and the honor of God would, in the minds of those given over to worldly things, result in an attempt to cause you to change your mind."

"Such has been the case, my Lord."

"What are the circumstances of the attack?"

"After the ball which was lately given at the Château, I was set upon by a horde of ruffians in the suite and pay of Frontenac. I wished to pay my addresses to a young lady there, in order that by marrying her I might rescue her from certain perdition."

"You do well to call it so," said the Bishop.

"It is their intention, or rather Frontenac's intention, to present another play," remarked De Vautreuil.

"Another play! And after our mandate read from the church-door!" exclaimed the Bishop, in astonishment.

"Yes, my Lord."

"But you are still living as a guest at the Château."

"No, my Lord, I have withdrawn, and am living in humble quarters till such time as I might see Your Lordship to find if nothing can be done."

This statement was not wholly false. Under one pretence and another, and being actuated both by a sense of shame and a desire for revenge, De Vautreuil had not yet returned to the Château, in spite of the pressing invitations of Frontenac. If his attempts upon the credulity of De Champigny and the Bishop should fail, however, it was his intention to yield to His Excellency's solicitations, and to return to the Château, since it would be useless for him to maintain a quarrel with His Excellency without assistance.

"I am glad to find that you disapprove of the frivolities of the Court," said the Bishop.

"Not only do I disapprove of them, but all France—nay, the King himself is scandalized by the rumors that reach him."

"His Majesty approves, then, of my attempts to purify the colony of this handmaid of heresy."

"Oh, yes, my Lord. During all my life I have been devoted to the interests of holy mother Church, and it grieves me sorely to witness the laxity prevailing."

"And you did not take part?"

"Only so far as courtesy compelled, my Lord. But even politeness could not cause me to refrain from suggesting to His Excellency the impropriety of loose example."

"Excellent young man! The Church indeed is fortunate in having one so devoted to her interests."

"There is but one way to upset the plans of His Excellency, and that I have found from conversations with the officers of his guard and those about him," remarked De Vautreuil.

"Are they too against him?"

"In spirit, my lord, for they have not lost all regard for religion; but they say that since Frontenac triumphs it is well to be on his side."

"And they say he triumphs?" said the Bishop, betraying for the first time a sign of emotion.

"Yes, my Lord."

"I will direct my secretary to demand the return of Marcelle to the convent."

"Yes, my Lord," said the duke, triumphantly, "and then?"

"And then I shall ask the meaning of the preparations."

In order that the reader may be better able to follow the trend of events in succeeding chapters, it will be necessary for him to peruse with care and patience a more detailed account of the relations of the governors, bishops, and intendants of New France with each other, from the time when the great Laval and the Jesuit fathers forced Mézy to resign and to return to France, to that of Saint-Vallier. The King in sending Courcelle to take the place of Mézy had withdrawn a man of force to replace him with a man of fire. No sooner had Courcelle been installed than Colbert, the minister, had had to counsel him to act more mildly. Then, too, the intendant of that time, M. Talon, though pious enough, prized his position

more than piety, and in obedience to the commands of his superiors had set himself to watch the clergy from his double vantage-ground. It was not long, therefore, till the agitation was renewed and a demand made by the Bishop for their recall. On one memorable occasion a Jesuit father compared them to the noxious toadstools that grow up in a night, but in the morning are cut down and thrown into the fire. The bishops of the Canadian Church had not relinquished their intention of making Canada a theocracy of the purest type. The slightest sign of heresy or carelessness, of latitude or liberalism, was viewed with instant suspicion and became the object of immediate attack. This policy of watching the morals as well as the faith of the people necessarily carried itself into all the details of life, and led subsequently, since it did not receive the official sanction and support of the Pope, to a series of situations as impossible as they were undesirable. When we consider, likewise, how unnecessary this policy of interference really was, its future aspect becomes more painful even than ill-advised. In reality, the civil power in Canada did not wish to interfere with the ecclesiastical, but unfortunately the ecclesiastical wished to dominate the civil. That this was not the policy of the Church in France itself was nothing to Laval or Saint-Vallier. They considered that Canada was in their hands for the good of the Faith, and boasted that there was not a heretic in all New France. With a craftiness that did doubtful service, the minister of Louis introduced the rivals of the Jesuits, the Récollets, into Canada, and in

this we have the foundation of a new cause of discord, which, while it strengthened the hands of the representative of the King in his conflict with the bishops, weakened the influence of the Church itself and precipitated difficulties not less scandalous than absurd. The King, it must be remembered, aspired to be himself the rock upon which the Church in Canada was to be built, and hence we see that whilst he censured the clergy he did not wish to injure the church itself. Had he wished he could have ended many of the quarrels before they had got fairly under weigh, by the simple process of refusing subsidies to ecclesiastics. Then, too, in the bishops and superior clergy were vested lands free of feudal tenure, and sometimes to such an extent that Laval before his death was the greatest single landowner in the colony.

When, therefore, in view of all these things, we read of differences in policy and opinion amongst the bishops themselves, as when Saint-Vallier undertook to do away with the importance of the Seminary of Quebec—the very life-work, one might say, of Laval himself, who was still alive at the time of the attempt—it is not difficult to foresee the possibility of the universal trials, troubles and disaster which subsequently came to pass. In conjunction with his efforts for the Church, Saint-Vallier employed some of the arts of Satan, nor did he hesitate to stoop to the meanest and smallest intrigues to gain his point. It would have been well for his reputation had he condescended to imitate the virtues and self-denial of the curés under

him. The combination of the spirit of the politician with the austerity of the rigid disciplinarian in their spiritual ruler naturally produced a condition of feverish unrest amongst the people themselves, and although the Marquis de Nonville submitted to the ordinances of the Bishop with regard to feasts, balls, dances, comedies, declamations, entertainments, irreverence, flirtation, luxury in dress, the wearing of fontanges and other abominations too numerous to mention, for himself, his wife and his unfortunate daughter, the Marquis de Frontenac had no intention whatever of so doing. Masqueraders were the objects of Saint-Vallier's special loathing, and the clergy and even the faithful were enjoined wherever they saw a mask upon a face to seize and tear it off without delay or compunction. On the other hand, the conduct of Courcelle on one memorable occasion was such as to justly offend the sensitive, whether faithful or faithless. A priest, old and infirm, had tottered past the governor's residence leaning upon his walking-stick on his way to Lower Town, whither he was going for the purpose of paying his usual pastoral visits. The governor sent a sergeant after him to order his immediate return. The priest refused to obey and in the morning was compelled to go on his bended knees before Courcelle and make a humble apology for his disobedience. The Congregation of the Holy Family, a society of women and girls which met in the cathedral, did not fail to report and divulge the secrets, scandals and common-places of everyday life to their clerical advisers, and this

also naturally gave rise to much commotion and annoyance.

To add further to the spirit of fear and general unrest—as if, indeed, anything were needed of that character—the dread of witchcraft spread its universal terrors over the land, but fortunately, with the exception of the case of the converted Huguenot miller and a girl of the city of Quebec, little was heard of the nefarious doings of these hideous spirits of the air; chiefly, no doubt, through the strenuous efforts of the clergy, who did all in their power to check fear of them at the outset. If penances were severe they were also frequently practical, and the condemnation of a penitent wife to the retaining of a troublesome servant in her employ had much to recommend it. When we see with what rapidity the spirit of wickedness and evil-doing spreads amongst the young it is manifest that if the measures to be taken for its suppression were to be effective they must necessarily be severe; and in a colony which presented opportunities and temptations of so varied a type, the licence of the ungodly often bade fair to destroy the results of years of patient toil on the part of the clergy, who, whatever may have been their faults, presented to the world the noblest spectacle of self-sacrifice and religious zeal recorded in the annals of martyrdom.

CHAPTER XXII.

FRONTENAC sat in his private apartments at the Château. The soft air of summer played gently with the fringe of the heavy curtains that hung over the windows and fell in sweeping folds upon the floor. A few books and many papers lay on the table before him. His brow was furrowed with deep thought as he looked moodily into space, while his mind ran rapidly over the growing discontent and the imminence of the impending struggle. As resolute and bold as he was just and kindly, he was not formed by nature for submission, nor was he so commanded by the King. A knock at the door was followed by the entrance of the attendant. Frontenac looked up in anger at the interruption.

"Father D'Anton wishes to see Your Excellency."

"Show him in, but stand ready to show him out," said Frontenac, curtly.

A dark, heavy-set priest of the Jesuit order entered. Frontenac remembered his face, and did not like it.

"What would you have of me?" he asked, without rising, and in the tone of one who had resolved to show his teeth.

"I am come from His Lordship Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, Bishop of Quebec and of the diocese of Canada, so appointed and ordained—"

"Your message?" said Frontenac, interrupting him.

"To inform Your Excellency that in the interest of morality and of the religion which you profess, you are required to return the maiden Marcelle Courtebois, daughter of the coureur-de-bois, to the Ursuline Convent, from which she was improperly taken by one of Your Excellency's officers, in order that she may again come under the control of His Lordship with a view to her entrance into the order of the Congregation of Our Lady."

The priest spoke in a mild and unoffending tone that induced Fortenac to hear him out.

"Does His Lordship feel that the young lady is in bad hands here?"

"His Lordship is impressed with the necessity of doing more for the suppression of frivolities than heretofore. His conscience has long reproached him that the society of Quebec, and under Your Excellency's eye, is so given over to idleness, luxury, and irreligion that the souls of the multitude are at the mercy of the Evil One. It is a matter of further reproach to him, he has bidden me say, that the young girl, having been clearly placed in his control by the hands of our Blessed Lady and the Providence of God, should have been taken from it by deceit and brought up to dress unbecomingly, to dance, and to conduct herself as if life here were everything instead of nothing."

"But such is not the case," said Frontenac. "Is there any charge that she evades her religious duties?"

"None that I know of, Your Excellency."

"What then?"

"But the danger—we are bidden to beware of the tempter and the despoiler of our precious ones."

"I am afraid, Father D'Anton, that we shall have to leave it to the young lady herself. I shall have her called in, and if she desires to leave the Château for the Convent of the Ursulines she certainly may do so." So saying, Frontenac directed that Marcelle should be called in, meanwhile continuing:

"Do you not think that His Lordship had better confine himself more to the religious life of his diocese and less to the civil? He has so interested himself —nay, has so interfered—in every department of my administration, that as representative of the King I am obliged to protest continually. It can only lead in the end to serious trouble. You will kindly convey to His Lordship my firm resolution not to yield my prerogative by the smallest particle, for so am I commanded by His Majesty."

"The affairs of man are as nothing in the eyes of God," said the priest, humbly.

"Nor in the eyes of His vicegerents? Then we shall see."

As Frontenac concluded a gentle tap at the door announced Marcelle. She entered, pale and trembling.

"Be seated, Marcelle," said Frontenac. "I have sent for you because this good Father D'Anton has been despatched by the Bishop to demand your return to the Convent."

"Oh, Your Excellency!" said Marcelle, breathlessly, as she fell into a chair, rather than sat in it.

"The Bishop is of opinion that you should enter the Convent to complete your religious education with a view to becoming a member of the Congregation of Our Lady. Do you wish to leave us? It remains for you to say."

Marcelle, who had been listening intently, suddenly reached forward and threw her arms about the neck of Frontenac, burying her face in his shoulder, and wept bitterly. Frontenac was much affected.

"Answer, Marcelle," said he, at last. "Which shall it be?"

"I do not wish to defy His Lordship, who has been very kind to me, and if he commands me to go by right of his authority in the Church I suppose I must go," sobbed Marcelle.

"You submit, then?" asked Father D'Anton, with triumph.

"If I must, father. But as for me, I do not wish to go."

"Then you shall not go. If you do not wish to go, you shall not go," said Frontenac, rising wrathfully and speaking hoarsely. "Too long have the affairs of my government and of my household been interfered with by Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, and I shall appeal to the King. To him I shall submit if so directed, but not till then."

"You defy the Church, then? Is that to be my message?" asked the priest, disappointedly.

"No, I do not defy the Church, but I defy Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. Let that be your message. It is enough."

Frontenac paced the floor in violent agitation after the priest's departure.

"Why should His Lordship have so suddenly wished me to leave the Château, Your Excellency?" asked Marcelle, tearfully.

"I do not know, my dear girl, and I do not care. So long as you wish to remain under my protection there is no power in that proud Bishop to take you away. Yet, if you take my advice, you will announce your engagement to Philippe Beauharnais. That, of course, would prevent your having to leave the Château."

"Would it not be well, if I must take such a measure of relief, for me to see the Bishop and get his consent?"

"It would be well, and I commend your sagacity in thinking of it. You will then be free from the anxieties of His Lordship and from the attentions of the Duke de Vautreuil."

"I loathe that man," said Marcelle, hastily. "He has a wicked face that no woman can mistake."

"Oh! you are a prejudiced lot, you women," said Frontenac, playfully, regaining his spirits at the prospect of a satisfactory settlement—satisfactory to him because he should defeat the Bishop and at the same time reward the fidelity of an old and faithful friend.

"Then I am to say that I wish to accept Philippe Beauharnais?" said Marcelle, rehearsing her instructions.

"Yes," replied Frontenac.

"It is a great pity," said Marcelle, "for I do not

love him. I do not want to be married. I am happy here."

"My dear girl," said Frontenac, affectionately, "you see how it will be. You cannot always remain single unless—unless you enter a convent."

"I am not fit to be a nun," continued Marcelle, disconsolately. "I am too fond of the air, the forest, the beautiful lakes, the great trees and the songs of the birds."

"You have your choice," said Frontenac, pressing his advantage. "Philippe Beauharnais, an estimable, honorable gentlemen, or a convent—or the Duke de Vautreuil."

"Never!" exclaimed Marcelle, fiercely. "Can I not go back to my little cabin? They shall not make me do what I do not want to do. It is slavery, and I shall not do it."

Marcelle was more in earnest than Frontenac ever had seen her, and he wondered at the unusual brilliance of her eyes. However, he laughed at her impetuosity, as he was accustomed to do, and bade her make her request. It could do no harm.

Somehow Marcelle felt as she put on her cloak of sombre black, and her hat without a plume, for she did not wish to attract attention by a gay attire, that fate was hard and the will of man unjust. But there was still a friend who would tell her what was best. Father Delaurier was her confessor. She would consult him first. It was now eleven. At twelve o'clock he would be at his confessional-box in the cathedral. She waited, musing and looking over her dresses and

jewels. She scanned her face in the glass carefully to see if all traces of weeping had disappeared. She tried to sing, but it was useless. At last the hour drew near enough for her to set out. Fortune favored her. She met Father Delaurier as he came from the Palace.

"I want to speak to you, Father Delaurier, please, before you go in."

"Have you much to say to me, Marcelle?" he asked, gently.

"No, father. I merely want to ask you if I do wrong if when the Bishop orders me I do not become a nun?"

Father Delaurier was startled, but he was one of those who believed that the Bishop overstepped his authority, and he answered, "You must not speak of what I tell you to anyone but myself—"

"I promise!" cried Marcelle, eagerly.

"No, you will not do wrong, but it is not well to defy the Bishop or produce scandal in the parish. Has he so ordered you?"

"Yes, father. He sent his messenger, Father D'Anton, to-day to require me to leave the Château on account of its frivolities and to go to the Convent again with that object in view."

"And do you not wish to marry?" asked Father Delaurier, archly, emphasizing the alternative.

"No, father; but I would rather marry than become a nun. I am not patient enough, nor could I shut myself up as the good nuns do."

"Then marry. It will meet the difficulty. Consult the Bishop and ask his blessing."

Fortified by the advice of Father Delaurier, Marcelle walked quickly, though with some apprehension, to the palace of the Bishop.

Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier was a man of lofty bearing and severe countenance, but withal of an underlying sensitiveness and sweetness of disposition that needed but the right occasion for it to become instantly manifest. As she heard his step in the hall Marcelle grew fearful. So much depended upon the interview.

"My Lord, you have ordered me to withdraw from the Château and re-enter the Convent," said Marcelle, in a low tone of dutiful humility.

"Yes, my child; I think it best."

"Then, my Lord, you do not wish me to marry?"

"To marry, Marcelle? I had not heard of this before—yet now that you speak, the duke did mention it."

"Will Your Lordship grant me permission to receive the attentions of Philippe Beauharnais?"

"There is nothing against it, I suppose," said the Bishop, quietly, though evidently at a loss. "You know it is our wish that there should be marriages, as many as possible that are suitable. It is in the interest of our blessed religion and of the welfare of the colony."

"Then I have Your Lordship's permission?"

"Yes."

As Marcelle knelt to receive the Bishop's blessing her mind was ill at ease. But an idea suddenly occurred to her which relieved her of her scruples.

"If, my Lord, by chance the marriage should not come to pass, or gives promise of being too long delayed, I shall report to Your Lordship and do as you wish?"

"That will be satisfactory to me, my child, and I am sure that you will feel the better for your ready submission to my wishes."

"Then it will not be necessary to return to the Convent?"

"No, my child."

Marcelle felt that the burden of a heavy load had been lifted from her heart, and returned to the Château joyful in mind, while the Bishop went to his frugal repast happy in the thought that the Church once more had triumphed, even in the household of the refractory Frontenac himself.

As Marcelle entered the Château she again sought His Excellency's door, but now devoid of apprehension and with a smile of happiness and content. To Frontenac she narrated the circumstances of her meeting with Father Delaurier and of her interview with the Bishop, all of which he commended.

"He has had his way in this case," said Frontenac. "I, too, must have mine. He has sent his messenger and has been obeyed. He has granted you a permission which he cannot well revoke. I wish you to visit the Seignory of Beauharnais in the meantime, but

the freedom of our household must be established despite His Lordship's order. I will have the play."

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, who felt that she could manage a sojourn at the seignory very well while preparations were going on which would be sure to rouse the Bishop to action once more and lead to distress and tumult. Frontenac intended Marcelle to take active part in a dramatic representation, of which naturally she would be the chief attraction, but lest she should be seized upon or ordered under pain of episcopal displeasure to withhold herself from such iniquities, he had determined to put her under the protection of the Count of Beauharnais, whose age and standing, both with the Church and in the colony, were such as to stifle criticism. He had foreseen, too, that it was quite possible that the Bishop or those of his clergy who still obeyed him, or perhaps, indeed, the count himself, who at his time of life was more inclined to side with the Church than with the state upon such a question, would exact from Marcelle a promise to avoid them. This did not so much matter so long as she remained personally free. The play to be presented was in the nature of a representation of life as it was in the colony, and therefore such that she would take her place in it without compunction or the effort of study. For the others it was a different matter. Upon them he could bring pressure. The season should close and the last ship should leave for France with the triumph of the King and the discomfiture of the Bishop. It

was to be a battle for civil liberty, fought upon a stage, with soldiers, accoutrements, flags and all the circumstance of war, without bloodshed or anything worse than a mandate and a few anathemas. Once and for all Frontenac had resolved to shake off the authority of De Saint-Vallier, and in a case such as this, where every effort would be made by the Bishop to re-assert his power, it would probably settle itself by an appeal to the King and to the final decision of the Bishop's superiors. Whatever might happen, affairs could not be worse than at present. Quarrels in the kitchen, conflicts in the streets, divisions in the common life of the citizens, all concerning the trivialities of what were called "morals," were gradually sapping the vitality of New France, and would ultimately render it an easy prey to England. European wars had rendered the probability of assistance from France, in case of need, exceedingly doubtful, and therefore it was doubly necessary that the life of the colony should no longer be disturbed from within. That he should in the end have the support both of the Church in France and of the King, Frontenac was certain. It needed but firmness on his part to ensure success.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Major La Montagne and Captain St. Just were playing chess in barracks. Wine, tobacco, and the pleasantries of convivial gossip helped them to while away the confinement to which they had been condemned. Their brethren in arms supplied them with details of the various happenings in the gay and festive life of the city, as well as in the more serious side.

"What do you think will be the next move of His Excellency?" inquired St. Just, àpropos of the news that the Bishop had demanded the return of Marcelle to the custody of the Convent of the Ursulines.

"To tell him to go to the devil," said La Montagne, wearied.

"But that won't settle it," said St. Just, reflectively.

"Mon dieu! no. However, His Excellency is bent upon defying him, and you remember his expressed wish to have another play."

"Yes; we shall have another play, sooner or later," said St. Just, bitterly; "but I am mistaken if it will be all play for all that."

"Your mind is wandering," said La Montagne, patronizingly, and pointing to the board. "That is merely Biteau's gossip."

"Not at all. Vautreuil has gone over to the Bishop altogether."

"That is, then, the result of the duel, you see. He has resented His Excellency's favoring of Beauharnais," said La Montagne.

"But his kindness to De Vautreuil; his visits—"

"They are nothing. This woman's beauty will be worse than the Iroquois yet."

St. Just laughed. "She will marry Beauharnais and then there will be an end of it."

"You think so? I do not. I will back De Vautreuil. What chance has a penniless Canadian with a rich aristocrat? Even Frontenac is not his equal."

Captain Du Lut opened the door. "What! At it again? Is it the King or the Bishop this time?" he asked, playfully.

"To what do you refer? I am beaten," said St. Just.

"To the death of Boileau's child."

"Well! what of that?"

"Mon dieu! It is nothing, but it will raise another storm all the same."

"Sit down and tell us about it."

"Oh! by-the-way, His Excellency has granted you liberty."

"What! Are we free?" shouted both together.

"Yes; I am to announce it to you."

Both officers rose simultaneously and danced gaily around the room together, singing snatches of whatever came into their heads.

"Now, when you have sobered down I will tell you of the child," said Du Lut.

"Never mind it."

"But of the row."

"Ah! yes; we are fond of fighting. Go on. Take a glass, and be quick. I shall dress for parade this afternoon."

"No parade," said Du Lut, sententiously.

"No band?"

"No."

"No ladies?"

"No."

"Sacré! What has become of it all?"

"Monsiegneur de Saint Vallier—" began Du Lut, in the monotone of a court officer.

"Be hanged!" said St. Just. "We are for the King and freedom. Here's to the King!"

The three men filled their glasses and drank off.

"Let us hear of the child," said La Montagne.

"You know, then," began Du Lut, "that Monseigneur objects to the fontanges."

"So I have heard."

"But His Excellency does not."

"Of course not. It is absurd."

"Well, Boileau had a daughter just eighteen years of age, pretty and gay."

"I will be introduced," said St. Just.

"She had a number of admirers, among others one Ménier, who is a smuggler. He brought her dresses and ribbons in his brandy boat, and lo! and behold

she had the audacity to go to Mireuil to mass dressed like a rainbow."

"Or a bird of Paradise."

"The curé condemned her to hell from the altar steps, and threatened all who should speak to her till she had made her peace with the ban of the Church."

"Well?"

"Then she died from spotted fever, and is buried in unconsecrated ground. But Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier declared that His Excellency had set her on to defy him, and he called down upon the heads of all traitors to the Church the vengeance of God. His Excellency says he will have no more of it, and is determined to assert the supremacy of the King. Meanwhile, your precious duellist angers the Governor beyond measure by threatening to go back to France and visit the King at Versailles in the interest of the Bishop unless Marcelle, the adopted daughter of His Excellency, is given to him in marriage instead of to Sieur de Beauharnais. Then orders are given by His Lordship that she be returned forthwith to the Ursuline Convent, in order—mark you!—in order that she may not further become contaminated by the balls, parties, theatricals and the heaven knows what which you gallants are guilty of to the scandal of His Lordship and the ruin of your own souls."

"Good! Hear! hear!" cried St. Just, laughing; but a look of concern took the place of a smile upon La Montagne's face.

"We cannot defy the Church," said the latter, seriously.

"No, certainly, but we can defy the Bishop, who thinks he is above the Church and the world, things mortal and immortal," retorted St. Just.

"Beware!" said La Montagne. "It is not for us to quarrel with him. You remember Rigot?"

St. Just's face straightened for a moment, but with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders he declared once more for the King, and continued:

"I will not be condemned for kissing a pretty woman or smoking a pipe. It is childish. There is no harm in it. The King enjoys himself at Versailles and nothing comes of it. The duke knows that, and is well aware that he is playing the hypocrite. Where is Beauharnais?"

"I have not seen him for many days. He is likely at the seignory till the affair blows over."

"It has blown over, else how should we be free?"

"Yes, but he is the favorite."

"True, and he may not have gone, after all."

"Let us play spin-the-dice since there is no band. What of the Holy Family?"

"Never mind them. They confess too much, I am sure, and will need more absolution than a priest can give them. I see Dilbot is in town again."

"What! With brandy?"

"He has come for the Bishop's blessing," said St. Just, at which he and Du Lut laughed loudly.

They played and talked and otherwise disported themselves in efforts to efface the remembrance of their *ennui*.

"I wish I could go to France," yawned St. Just, hopelessly.

"That will never be. You are doomed," said La Montagne.

A messenger entered and handed a letter to La Montagne. "It is for you, St. Just," said he, turning it over, "and from His Excellency. It is for you to go to France, eh? No?"

St. Just blushed with pride as he rose and repaired to his dressing-room. It was a summons from His Excellency to his presence. Without delay St. Just put himself in proper shape to appear, and then walked across the square to the Château.

"I wish you," said Frontenac, ignoring the fact that he had not seen St. Just for days, "to convey with due speed this letter to the Count de Beauharnais. I will tell you the purport of it, as I wish you to carry out in person its provisions."

St. Just bowed low. "Yes, Your Excellency."

"I am anxious that Demoiselle Marcelle shall have the pleasure of paying the Count de Beauharnais another visit at Beauharnais, since it will not only be a pleasant diversion, but it will also give her a much-needed outing before the autumn closes in upon us with its short evenings."

"Yes, Your Excellency, I shall get a Montagnais whom I know to be a good guide in the river and a good canoeman, and will start without delay."

"You will return before dark?"

"If the count is at home, Your Excellency. Otherwise, shall I wait?"

"By all means; I desire an answer," said Frontenac.

St. Just took the letter and despatched a messenger for the Montagnais. Not many minutes after they were gliding swiftly over the surface of the St. Lawrence towards their destination. The old count was found walking to and fro in front of his house, taking a last peep at the sun before it disappeared behind the hills. He adjusted his spectacles and read the missive.

"His Excellency is good enough to say that you do not need a letter of reply," said he, smiling pleasantly. "Tell His Excellency, I beseech you, that Beauharnais is at the service of Demoiselle Marcelle, who, I understand, is at the present moment suffering from the close city air. I do not wonder. She will soon recover here."

"This is some new move of His Excellency's," thought St. Just, as he walked away. "Marcelle never looked better in her life. But it is not for me to do other than to keep silence if I value my future."

Though the visit had been short, the darkness of night was already coming down, and St. Just took his paddle with a firmer grip. The Montagnais now and then looked nervously about, keeping his eye on the island and along the shore. All at once he called to St. Just in Indian, "Paddle! The Iroquois!"

It was not necessary to cry 'paddle' to St. Just when he heard the word "Iroquois." With a bound the birchbark gained new headway, but after a few strokes the Montagnais changed his mind and turned it shorewards. However, their pursuers were but

equal in number, and St. Just was armed, having an arquebuse. They gained the shore and sprang out quickly, St. Just making for a large tree, while the Montagnais followed, carrying the canoe. The two Iroquois, who had with their usual daring ventured far in quest of adventure and of prey, stopped as they saw the arquebuse raised, and paddled slowly off towards the corner of the island.

"They will come again," said the Montagnais, "and attack us at night."

"What had we better do, then? But I am not afraid of them," said St. Just, fearlessly.

"They are Mohawks," remarked the Indian, as if that were enough.

"And I am a Frenchman and you are a Montagnais," said St. Just, at last, with a boldness which he was far from feeling. However, it had the desired effect upon the pride of the Indian, for he straightway put the canoe in the water again and pointed along shore. "We will go this way," he said, "and then we can dart across the river."

"Iroquois are in the river, Your Excellency," said St. Just, as he stood once more before Frontenac.

"Then I wish you to clear them out with all possible despatch," said Frontenac, with annoyance. "Not one of these marauders must be within fifty miles of Quebec by this day week. I leave that to you. Report to Major La Montagne and request him to come to me in the morning. Have you a letter?"

"No, Your Excellency. The Count de Beauharnais

answered by word of mouth, and places Beauharnais at the demoiselle's service."

"Very well. You have done as I told you. That will do."

St. Just sought his quarters, cursing the Iroquois. But it was of no avail; the command of His Excellency must be obeyed. La Montagne laughed, but said nothing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Duke de Vautreuil was a man of sullen and determined character. To this he added much of the boldness and indiscretion of youth, so that when he heard that not only was Marcelle not to re-enter the Convent and once more come under the control of the Bishop, but that on the contrary she was to be betrothed to Philippe Beauharnais and to pay a visit to the count his father, his jealous rage was roused to a high pitch and his energies to action. That he, the representative of one of the proudest houses of Old France, should be set at naught even by Frontenac himself was little to his liking, and he vowed that he would make him repent it. As for Philippe Beauharnais, he had with him a double injury to avenge. In the end he had no doubt that he should gain possession of Marcelle, who had continued to avoid him, without giving him serious offence, and had thus unknowingly added to the frenzy of passion the pride of future conquest. The Bishop he regarded as a dupe of Frontenac and he resolved to enlighten him without further delay.

"Your Lordship has consented, I have heard, to the proposed betrothal of the daughter of the coureur-de-bois to Philippe Beauharnais," said De Vautreuil.

"Yes," replied the Bishop. "The young maiden has expressed a preference for him. You know we are anxious that none of the women of the colony shall remain single, and it has given me great joy to receive her dutiful submission. I have given her my blessing, and I pray that no ill may befall her." Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier did not observe the disturbed condition of the young duke's feelings.

"Then you consent to her taking part in the play about to be given at the Château?"

"I think you are mistaken," replied His Lordship, frowning slightly. "There is hardly likely to be another attempt at so bold a defiance of my authority, but even if that were possible, Marcelle is to become a wife and she, therefore, will not take part in further frivolities."

"You are sure of that, my lord?"

"She has renewed her submission, and I have every confidence in her good faith."

"But if you are not certain would it not be well to make sure?"

"I deem it unnecessary," replied the Bishop, "to put further questions to her, in view of her being, as you see, willingly under my guidance. In fact, she would have returned to the Convent at once were it not that it is impossible to receive there the attentions of Major Beauharnais. She is perfectly willing, dear child, to do as I direct."

The duke tossed his head in contempt of the Bishop's credulity. He could plainly expect no aid from the Church. The visit of Marcelle to Beauharnais

had been announced and soon became common property. When it first reached the ears of the duke he had thought of lying in ambush with his twenty retainers, taking her captive and hurrying her aboard his vessel, moored at a convenient point in the river. On second thought, however, this would be too hazardous an undertaking, since she would be escorted by an officer and soldiers as a guard of honor, the usual accompaniment of a member of the vice-regal household upon a state visit. To fight with the escort would mean treason to the King. Of affairs of a treasonable character the duke had already seen the disastrous results. He was prepared to take Marcelle by stealth, but not by force. The opportunity would, in all probability, present itself in the course of her stay at Beauharnais. With due secrecy such an undertaking could then be safely carried out. His own men were devoted to his interests, and their necks would depend upon their success. Once away, he would arrive in France without a possibility of the news having preceded him, and it would then be easy to spirit his victim away to one of the more remote of his country-seats, where nothing further would be heard of her. The more he ran the details of the project thus over in his mind, the more feasible it looked, till already in anticipation, like a baron of the Middle Ages, he embraced the beautiful captive. He was impatient to see his skipper, a man of much firmness of purpose, but likely to have little or no scruples where women or his own interests were concerned. To him the duke unfolded his scheme.

"A young lady of the Château St. Louis is about to go upon a visit to the Seignory of Beauharnais, which lies off the Island of Orleans. You know it."

"I do, master."

"You are prepared to do my bidding?" asked the duke, looking at him narrowly.

"Yes, master."

"You will drop down the river to a point below the seignory. It will be necessary to say why you go. It will do to intimate that your canvas has been lying idle and needs an airing before our departure for France."

"It will be well to go up the river first, master," suggested the skipper, cunningly. "A stretch or two the other way first would throw them off the scent."

"You are right, Lebrun."

"By what day should I be there, master?"

"A week or two weeks hence, but no longer. We must excite no suspicion, and let not the men know. The secret remains with you."

"You have told me only part of the secret, master," said the skipper, grinning familiarly."

"At the time appointed, which I shall arrange, this lady will go aboard with me—perhaps unwillingly, but that is nothing to you; and be prepared to sail for France on the following morning."

The skipper, who had stood with his hat in hand respectfully receiving his instructions, now put it on and went off smiling. That he could be trusted the duke felt assured, yet he threw a glance of suspicion at him as he walked away.

The departure of Marcelle for Beauharnais was attended with a degree of ceremony befitting her adopted rank. Five canoes, all of the ordinary size, excepting one which, larger and more sumptuously furnished than the rest, was destined for her conveyance, lay at the wharf in waiting. Major La Montagne was in command of the escort. The vice-regal carriage, with footmen in livery, looked strange amid the more natural character of the surroundings, although the costumes of the Canadians were equal to those of the attendants in point of color, if not of costliness. The descent of the carriage to within reach of the wharf was attended with so much jolting and danger that Marcelle begged of La Montagne to desist.

"I will get out and walk. It is safer," she said, laughingly, when the carriage stopped.

"A carriage on land is like a canoe on shore in this country," said La Montagne, "but for all that, ceremony is not inappropriate."

"I suppose that it is required, that we may not draw disgrace upon His Excellency, but as to its use I can see but very little of it," said Marcelle.

A crowd gathered near to see them embark. Already the soldiers forming the escort had been put with the luggage into the smaller canoes, which had dropped behind, and were being held at the wharf against the slow-moving current of the river by the paddles of the canoemen. All this the Duke de Vautreuil watched with interest as he stood upon the terrace-wall looking at the preparation and departure.

When St. Just received his order from Frontenac to scour the vicinity of the seat of government, and to drive the small bands of audacious Iroquois from the more settled parts of the colony and back to the forests from the water-way of commerce, the St. Lawrence river, he was, as we have seen, not too well pleased. He felt that he had brought it on himself, however, by informing the Governor of the pursuit of himself and the Montagnais, and yet, being no coward, when the order was given he prepared himself to carry it out. The ordinary soldiers of the garrison, untrained to Indian warfare and the artifices of the red men, would have been worse than useless in pursuit of them, although in case of defence, under proper guidance, they could perform their part with courage and success. But the men required by him on this occasion were those who, at once bold fighters and skilful canoemen, keen of sight and quick to draw the right conclusion, were capable of equalling the Indian in strategem and of meeting him successfully face to face. With this in view St. Just strolled into the brandy and tobacco shops of Lower Town with two companions of the class he was in quest of. Relying upon his own judgment as well as upon the acuteness of his companions and their personal acquaintanceship with the men sought for, he was not long in unearthing a score or more of the sort desired and in concluding a bargain with them. The contract having been signed, or properly speaking, agreed to, for the men could in no one instance either read or write, further details of the equipment were left in the

hands of their leader, a man without fear and of a physique and stamina fitted to carry out what would certainly be required of him. He was a coureur-de-bois, as were several of his men, the remainder being made up of Canadians accustomed to Indian warfare and of half-breed descendants of the various tribes in the vicinity of Quebec and discharged soldiers of the Salières-Carignan regiment, so famous in colonial history.

The equipment of the expedition consisted as usual of canoes and arms—in this case for fifty men. Of provisions, however, but a small quantity was taken, since fish and game were abundant, and each member of the party was supposed to furnish himself with food. The start was made an hour before dawn, in order that the landing upon the opposite or adjacent shore should not be a warning to an enemy, Since the last attack of a severe and threatening character, several small expeditions had been despatched from Quebec to police the rural districts and, if necessary, frighten off the scouts and forerunners of new bodies of the enemy. Of late the increasing boldness of the hostiles demanded more energetic measures. St. Just, having taken counsel with His Excellency and the leader of his men, decided to land one small party at Trois Rivières, another at the mouth of the Chaudière, and still another at Beauport or St. Anne. From Trois Rivières and St. Anne, after exploring the river, they could strike into the forest and meet at or near Quebec again. The Chaudière party was, after exploring

the south shore, to return to the same point as near as possible to the time at which the north shore party was expected there.

Nothing of moment, or even of interest, attracted the attention of St. Just at Chaudière, where the original party divided into three and proceeded on its several ways as already outlined. St. Just himself undertook the St. Anne station, which he finally decided upon in preference to that of Beauport. All were now keenly alive to their duties and on the watch for signs or traces of the red men. Having arrived at St. Anne, scouts were sent out into the forests like hounds despatched in quest of deer. St. Just with two canoes, one containing himself, two canoemen and two soldiers, the other a single scout whose duty it was to go ahead and discover if aught of a significant or threatening character lay before them, set out upon the river from St. Anne eastward past the extremity of the Island of Orleans. The scout was a coureur-de-bois whose reputation for sagacity extended from La Chine to Isle Percée upon the river, and wherever the coureurs wandered in the forest. As the reader will have noticed in the case of Marcelle's first meeting with Jean Dilbot, the coureurs-de-bois formed an order whose totem or coat-of-arms was a red deer, which served as a sign of union as useful and as effective as colors to the members of a regiment or the sign of the cross to believers. It must not be supposed, however, that the coureurs-de bois were indistinguishable except by this insignium. On the contrary, the bearing and facial appearance of

a coureur distinguished him from other men in a marked degree, yet in case of need it served its purpose in a manner always prompt, if sometimes fantastic. As Barcot, the scout in question, stole silently in his boat of bark from shadow to shadow, from bay to bay, and point to point, his attention was attracted by a canoe almost opposite to his own, but upon the farther side of an island which lay between, and which in another instant would hide it from view. Barcot gave a low whistle such as the night-bird gives in the depths of the woods at mating-time. The other canoeman caught the sound instantly and turned.

"Where do you go, Barcot?" asked he, carelessly, as the canoes drew near each other and he recognized the scout.

"Have you seen anything?" asked the scout, looking deeply into the other's eyes.

"I have. But it is nothing. A woman, that is all."

"Fair and foul, like the word of an Iroquois," suggested Barcot, smiling at his own jest.

"Monsieur le duc takes a lady with him to France, but she does not wish to leave the country. She is too fond of Canada," said the other, laughing quietly.

"Who is she?"

"I do not know."

"No lying. What do you know?" demanded Barcot, curtly.

"Pardieu! I know nothing. It is someone at Beauharnais."

"It is Marcelle," exclaimed Barcot, with horror. "When does it happen?"

"Not the daughter of Black John?" inquired the other, who had heard her name often in the streets of Quebec.

"Yes, at the Château. She left a week ago to pay a visit to the old seigneur. You remember the duel?" answered Barcot, hurriedly.

"I do, and he shall not get her. Pardieu! I would scuttle him first. She is to marry the young seigneur?"

"Yes, and she shall," said Barcot.

"She shall," echoed the other. "I am on my way from the ship now, which is at anchor two leagues below. She is to be taken to-night, if I get back to tell monsieur where his ship is and that all is ready."

"Which you will not do," said Barcott, admiringly.

"Never! By God in heaven! She is one of us. Although I am well paid, I will put my knife under his leathern coat rather. Down with the traitor!"

"No," said Barcot, reflectively, "that will not do. You will be suspected if you do not arrive. Go, but tell the duke that something has gone wrong with the ship—the rudder is loose, or what you like, Keep him for two days and then—how many men has he?"

"With him? I do not know, but one is Leblanc."

Barcot turned black with rage. "Good! I will kill him. I have waited long. He is a coward, and keeps under the roofs of Quebec." A new incentive and excitement was added to the adventure for the scout. But Leblanc had married the other's sister, and had Barcot not been so angry for the moment he would have noticed the effect of his words. The

stranger, as we shall call the duke's coureur, having recovered countenance, carried it off amiably.

"Well! What do you propose, comrade?" he asked.

"There are not many, you say?" said Barcot. "Then, let it take place to-night."

"To-morrow night," suggested the stranger, eagerly.

"Very well," said Barcot; "Captain St. Just is behind. We have too many as it is. We shall land two and then go on."

"Agreed!" said the stranger. "That will do."

Barcot, however, was prone to suspect. After the interview the stranger paddled leisurely away and the scout did likewise, but only till a point of land had hidden him from view. Then with a sweep of his paddle he turned the birchbark about and sat motionless, watching through the leaves of the bush the departing messenger.

"So!" exclaimed Barcot, with satisfaction, as he saw the latter quicken his pace till at last he put all his strength into the stroke. "He has told me too much, has he? Not this time, my brave comrade," and satisfying himself that it was time for action, he, too, changing his paddle hand, sent his craft with a bound over the water. St. Just watched the return of the approaching scout with some concern, supposing that he came with news of a party of Iroquois or mayhap of smugglers. But he was more concerned than ever when he heard of the duke's plot, and without a moment's hesitation he prepared to forestall him.

"Put about and land there, Blackbird, with all speed," said he, addressing his half-breed steersman and pointing to the main shore.

The soldiers were landed, and with their arms and a small pack of provisions were left to make their way back to camp, while without further delay St. Just with the others set out after Barcot, who with a long lead was making steadily off in the direction of Beauharnais.

CHAPTER XXV.

When Barcot indiscreetly discovered his intense hatred of Leblanc to the duke's scout the feeling of loyalty to his order, aroused by the words of Barcot, subsided in the stranger's breast. It was well known that Barcot was cruel and relentless, that a wolf was not more persistent upon the track of a deer than he upon the trail of his victim. The Duke de Vautreuil and his men were camped in a deep recess in the forest not far from Beauharnais, and yet was the camping-place so hidden from view that it was as secure from discovery as if it had been a hundred miles back from the north shore. The duke was uneasy and apprehensive. In a land where instinct superseded reason, of Indians and coureurs-de-bois, the inhabitants partook more of the nature of birds and animals than of that of men. The same sublety, the same keenness of sight and scent—in a word, the same mysterious faculty of finding out things the most obscure, and communicating them from or to places the most inaccessible and remote, characterized as with these the Indians, the half-breeds and the coureurs-de-bois. Being aware of this, De Vautreuil was ill at ease, nor was he free from fear that the coureurs-de-bois, hearing of his action, might succeed in taking vengeance upon him before he should be able to reach the ocean

and safety. He was sitting in his tent waiting, but impatiently, for the arrival of word where his skipper had anchored and that all was ready for action, when his scout arrived. Upon being shown into the duke's tent the latter delivered his message, taking care at the same time to say that in the skipper's opinion not a moment should be lost in case a storm might suddenly arise, which, by reason of the position of the vessel near the south shore, might necessitate a new anchorage and new plans. To Leblanc, however, the real condition of affairs was made known, and the latter, whose character Barcot had described aright, was immediately thrown into a state of consternation. It was then within an hour of darkness, and the plan being to seize Marcelle when she was taking her customary evening walk through the grounds about the manor-house in company with the lord of Beauharnais, there was no time to lose. Leblanc was about to interview the duke when the latter came himself to seek him. Immediate action was decided upon. The canoes were at once dragged from their hiding-places, tents were struck, and every preparation made for departure.

While still the sun shone brightly above the horizon, two canoes were being headed for Beauharnais, the others remaining stationary in the neighborhood to afford aid in case of necessity. From time to time both the duke and Leblanc looked anxiously about, but no other craft hove in sight to disturb them in their undertaking. They landed and set to work. The duke could not trust himself to superintend personally the taking of Marcelle captive, and with instructions

regarding her treatment in case of resistance he left the rest in the hands of Leblanc and lay hidden in the bush. Having approached the portion of the demesne in the vicinity of the manor-house, Leblanc and his men plunged into the thicket and were soon lost to view. The duke gave them a time for their return which they themselves had thought to be reasonable, and then began to grow restless and impatient. He had expected to hear a scream or two, or perhaps a word of beseeching, but the calm evening air remained undisturbed and it seemed to him even as if the waters of the St. Lawrence, so silent were they, for once stood still. He was standing in the attitude of listening and expectancy, when Barcot crept up behind him and, before he was aware, had placed one hand upon his mouth, at the same time seizing him firmly by the throat with the other. With an effort the duke turned half round, but was thrown violently to the ground and held there half-choked and powerless.

"If you make a sound I will kill you," said the scout, in a low tone, still holding his hand upon the duke's mouth. Then Barcot released him and drew his knife. He now pointed to the wood in the direction of the château and bade the duke arise and move thither. They had gone but a rod or two when they came upon St. Just, who stood waiting anxiously. Not a word was spoken, and St. Just by a threatening sign gave warning to the duke that his safety lay in silence. When they had come to the brow of the hill upon the summit of which the château stood, the cause of his discomfiture presented itself to the duke's eyes. The

men despatched by him to carry out Marcelle's capture lay bound and bleeding upon the ground, and gagged beyond the possibility of uttering a sound. The four prisoners were then placed in the strong room of the manor-house and a guard set over them. When this had been done to his satisfaction, St. Just set about either capturing or driving off the duke's men waiting near at hand upon the river.

When Marcelle and the old seigneur had begun their usual evening stroll the golden clouds of the southern and eastern skies were reflecting the splendor of the declining sun with unusual brilliance.

"Look there, Seigneur, and there," said Marcelle, as pointing to the sky she directed his attention to this or that bit of coloring or excessive brightness. "At the Lake of the Hurons that would mean a stormy night, rain and the howling of the wind."

"It will not mean so with us," said the old seigneur, cheerily; "it may mean a freshening of the air, and we shan't be sorry, shall we? It has been oppressively hot. I hope my son will not meet with a storm. He will be on Lake Champlain by now if he is returning."

"God will protect him, Seigneur. He is a worthy son," said Marcelle, consolingly.

"Yes, he is a worthy son and has been a great boon to me. October will be a fine month for the wedding, and then you and he will, after the lovely autumn in the country, return to Quebec for the season of gaiety."

"And you, Seigneur."

"No, not I, Marcelle," said the the old man, sadly; "I shall live out my days at Beauharnais."

"But why remain shut up here in the winter?"

"It is not so long," replied the old man, looking up; "and when I was young I loved winter more than summer. I used to go from Beauharnais to Quebec and Trois Rivières on snowshoes, and enjoyed every moment of it. The air was crisp then and always clear, but it is changed now. The sun is not so bright upon the snow as it used to be, but I suppose it is because I am growing old and feeble."

"Here is Captain St. Just," exclaimed Marcelle, in surprise, as that officer came in sight from the wood, followed by two men in the garb of canoemen or hunters.

"Good evening, Demoiselle, and you, Seigneur," said St. Just. "The evening looks clear and bright, but bids fair to be a stormy one; but it is not merely the pleasure of greeting you once more that has brought me hither."

The Count de Beauharnais and Marcelle were shocked and disturbed by the news of the Duke de Vautreuil's wicked plot for her capture, but both were grateful that Providence had given timely warning to a friend and protector. They gladly yielded themselves into the safe-keeping and guidance of St. Just, who, without wasting the few moments of precious time at his disposal, strengthened the barricade of their apartments and put a trusted servant on guard in case of surprise. Then, having borrowed a hat and cloak of Marcelle's, he put it upon one of the serving-

women who looked most like Marcelle in height and figure. He himself resolved to personate the Count de Beauharnais. His men were stationed in a convenient place near at hand, and yet completely hidden from the view of those approaching. Behind the courtyard wall of the manor-house he placed the Count de Beauharnais' men, consisting of three habitants and seven of those who worked upon their farms. Happily these had not yet gone to their cottages for the night. They were strong men, and valuable in an emergency such as this. Near the river and in view of it, so as to command a sweep of all approaches to the shore below, Barcot was placed, that he might, upon the drawing near of strangers, give warning by the pre-arranged signal. His plans being set in order and all made ready, St. Just and the servant-maid began their promenade. St. Just leaned upon his walking-stick and stopped ever and anon to peep at the sky, as the seigneur had done, while the maid walked demurely beside him in imitation of Marcelle.

"Hark! It is the signal," said he, as the clear note of the whip-poor-will fell upon his ear. "Now, men, be prepared to do your duty." The evening walk continued, St. Just stopping now and then to address to the maid some words of regret or prophecy, when he became conscious of the near approach of Marcelle's abductors. He had planned that as they came to the end of the path leading to the manor-house and were on the point of darting forward to seize Marcelle, his own men should rush upon them from behind, the others from the courtyard immediately coming to their

assistance. It all fell out as he had planned. The duke's men, Leblanc leading, crept cautiously up, and just as they were ready to spring upon their intended victim, they themselves were fallen upon from behind. Upon a given signal,the others from the courtyard came running out and overpowered them. They attempted to shout for help to their comrades upon the river, but in a trice they were beaten into silence and submission. Meanwhile there had occurred something of an even more important character in the wood below. As soon as Barcot had made sure that the others had been disposed of, he seized the duke, as has been described, and then drove him up the pathway to the manor-house.

"You, too, will enter the house," said St. Just to the duke, pointing to the manor-house. The duke for an instant demurred, but a look about convinced him that to resist would be useless. When once within, where a sound of disturbance would matter little, he was bound like the others, and consigned to the strong room.

"What! Do you throw me to the dogs?" he exclaimed, as he drew back from the indignity offered him.

"I dishonor them, not you," said St. Just, contemptuously. "Enter, and be quick about it." Leaving a habitant on guard, St. Just, under the guidance of Barcot, collected his men and hastened to the woods bordering the river near where they had landed. The others of the duke's party were not in sight.

"Where are they, do you think, Barcot?" whispered St. Just, peering through the bushes.

"Hidden yonder along shore," replied the scout.

"Shall we, then, attack them, or wait?"

"We shall wait, Monsieur le Capitaine, and when they come to the Duke's aid we fire."

"But it will be bloody work, and so far we have come off without it. If his Excellency—"

"Then they will rescue him and overpower us."

"Well, perhaps you are right," assented St. Just. "Now, men, as Barcot says."

The scout withdrew into the bushes and set up a cry for help so loud and strenuous that it brought the duke's reserve in hot haste from their hiding-places. As they paddled up and stepped quickly on shore, Barcot gave the word and five arquebuses emptied their murderous contents upon the unsuspecting victims. A number fell. The remainder threw themselves upon the ground, and, being chiefly soldiers and sailors belonging to the duke's ship, cried out that they surrendered.

St. Just at once stepped forth into view and ordered them to throw up their hands. This they readily did. He then ordered them, as many as were able, to stack their arms and move to the left. Having in this way put further resistance beyond their power, he called to Barcot and they descended to the shore. Four of the Frenchmen were already dead, and one lay wounded and moaning with pain. A gaping wound showed where the slugs had torn an ugly hole in the poor fellow's side.

"He will be dead, too, in an hour," said Barcot, pitilessly; "let us attend to the others."

But St. Just called to two of his men from the ambush, who took the wounded man and carried him to a softer bed. One by one the prisoners were brought forward to have their arms pinioned. It was the work of not many minutes, and by the time darkness had begun to settle down upon the face of nature, making friends and foes alike obscure, the prisoners had been placed safely within the courtyard of the château, the gates closed and barred and a strong guard set upon the windows and upon the walls overlooking them. St. Just, however, was relieved when daylight came, and being exceedingly desirous of getting the duke and responsibility off his hands, he was on his way to Quebec with the entire party of captors and captives before the sun had fairly risen in its morning strength and splendor.

It is doubtful if an attack by the Iroquois, or even by their allies, the English, could have created a sensation equal to that produced by the landing of the duke and his men as prisoners in charge of Captain St. Just. The crowd of loungers and the ill-to-do was speedily increased by a better class, whose curiosity overcame their feeling of reserve. But to the repeated questions of the spectators, who, having witnessed the approach and landing, now followed the prisoners and their guardians in their march to the citadel, not a word of explanation was given In response to an order from St. Just, the party drew up before the gates of the fort to await

the pleasure of His Excellency. The surprise of Frontenac, when intelligence was conveyed to him of the attempted abduction and its results, can be imagined. By his order the prisoners, with the exception of the duke, were placed in security to await further disposal. The duke was invited, with a degree of ceremony and consideration due perhaps to his rank but not to his feelings, to enter the quarters of the officers, where he was provided with accommodation till such time as His Excellency should have heard the particulars of his capture and should make up his mind what to do about it. To St. Just Frontenac gave orders that he should at once repair to Beauharnais and request the attendance of the Count de Beauharnais, whom he intended should remain at the Château St. Louis till his son's return. Marcelle should, of course, also return with him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

To try the duke and find him guilty would be to incur the unpleasant responsibility of sentencing him in accordance with his deserts. His punishment could not be less than ten years' imprisonment at hard labor within the walls of the common prison. Powerful friends at the Court of Louis would beyond doubt straightway interest themselves in his welfare, and would demand, if indeed they did not succeed in procuring, his early release. Frontenac therefore decided to avoid a cause of future trouble and annoyance by leaving the trial of the offender to the King's Court at Paris, trusting to the evidence which he would forward to procure a punishment which he himself would not dare to inflict. As a consequence the depositions of St. Just and his principal assistants were taken and properly attested in readiness for the prisoner's committal.

"There is something of the irony of fate in this fortunate rescue, Captain St. Just, for which I have prepared to recommend your immediate promotion," said Frontenac, as he sat chatting with that officer.

"There is, Your Excellency; but first let me thank you for recommending my promotion. It is, I feel, more than I deserve," said St. Just.

"The Duke de Vautreuil," continued Frontenac, "is a villain, and his attempt will bring with it, I hope, the punishment which it deserves. I have decided, in view of all the circumstances concerning it, to have the marriage of Major Beauharnais take place as soon after his return as possible. It will enable him to set up housekeeping in the city for the winter season and to bring the aged seigneur, his father, with him from Beauharnais, which is as lonely and desolate a place of residence in winter as it is beautiful and desirable in summer. I shall rely largely upon you to carry out my wishes in respect of the arrangements."

"Yes, Your Excellency," assented St. Just, who felt, however, as if he were signing his own death-warrant in assisting in the final disposal of Marcelle. "A runner has arrived, Your Excellency," exclaimed St. Just, suddenly starting up as he caught sight of the form of post-haste in vogue in those days in Canada, flashing past the window and bringing up at the door.

"Admit him at once, but stand by as usual," said Frontenac. The Algonquin youth was brought into the room with an interpreter, a staff for the purpose of interpretation being kept within reach of His Excellency and the Sovereign Council. Standing before His Excellency the youth displayed neither boldness nor a sense of shyness, but the usual calm indifference of the red man. He drew from his leathern girdle a piece of paper that bore evidence of having been hurriedly torn off from a larger one for

the purpose of immediate use. It was handed by St Just to His Excellency, who read as follows:

"Your Excellency,—In all haste by runner. I have met Onontario, the Algonquin, who informs me that six hundred Iroquois are on their way to attack Trois Rivières. It is said, also, that a large party is preparing to join them, if they are successful, in attacking Montreal. Your Excellency's devoted servant,

12m. PHILIPPE N. S. BEAUHARNAIS."

"You will take, Captain St. Just, a message to Major La Montagne at once," said Frontenac, as he finished reading, "and prepare to send fifty soldiers in all haste to the aid of Trois Rivières, and if it is already being besieged, to relieve it."

The news of the intended expedition spread rapidly. The Indian runner was taken into the kitchen of the Château and fed in preparation for his immediate return with word from His Excellency. He was tall and slight and did not give the impression of being particularly active, but he had a way of moving as if without exertion that told of speed without exhaustion. He had covered the space of thirty leagues between Trois Rivières and Quebec in but little more than twelve hours, as indicated by the message. His face was of the greyhound cast, long, thin and expressionless, but yet indicative of that peculiar sort of determination which is born in a man and does not require power of will to put it in motion. Not being a brave, no feather adorned his long straight hair, and beyond the bird's claw at his throat he possessed, with

the exception of the broad girdle or leather clout at the waist, no further article of ornament or dress upon his body or limbs. His feet were clothed in the usual mooseskin moccasins.

The garrison at Quebec was divided into two parts for military purposes, one having the protection and defence of the city under its especial care, and the other held in readiness to relieve and succor the villages and small centres of population along the banks of the St. Lawrence. The relieving column being made up of light infantry, was dressed, armed and accoutred in a manner entirely different from that of the regular soldiers of France, whose uniform they assumed only on more formal occasions. Besides the arquebuses, they took with them a small piece of brass ordnance, which served the double purpose of signalling to the besieged and of carrying terror into the ranks of the enemy. Each soldier was a competent canoeman. St. Just was entrusted with the command. Before the day had begun to wane the relief party was on its way up the river.

Frontenac, Her Excellency and Marcelle stood waving signals of good-bye to St. Just and his men from the balcony, and long after the latter had disappeared in the distance, they stood as if hoping still to catch a last glimpse of those going to the rescue of Philippe Beauharnais and the people of Trois Rivières.

"God grant that they may get there in time," said Frontenac. "It is a perilous business and one which I wish we could see the last of. To you, my dear,"

said he, addressing Marcelle, "it must be a moment of especial anxiety."

"May the Blessed Virgin sustain you," piously added Madame de Frontenac.

"I never could see," continued Madame de Frontenac, after a pause, during which all seemed to recover from the shock of the occasion and to prepare calmly for what the future might have in store, "why people were ever anxious to leave beautiful France for a wilderness full of wild animals and ferocious savages."

"My dear," replied her husband, "a spice of danger adds to the zest of life, and while you speak of the beauty of France, your sense of that danger makes you forget the beauty of this land of teeming waters and limitless forests."

"True, husband," said Madame de Frontenac, "the lakes and rivers here are even more than lakes and rivers; they are seas and great streams that fill the oceans. The inland waters, too, are, so far as I have seen them, gems of beauty; but then, you know, nothing can atone for the long winter."

"What say you in reply to these severe criticisms of my wife's?" said Frontenac, turning laughingly to Marcelle.

"Her Excellency may be right," replied Marcelle. "From mid-December till the approach of spring the waters are locked in ice, the land covered with snow; but then who would wish, having been born in the forest as I have, and in the winter, too, to leave a land where one's very soul is filled with the pleasures

of the woods and where, as His Excellency has just said, a sense of danger keeps one from being dull."

"Dull?" exclaimed Madame de Frontenac, laughing. "Surely not. I should like to have a quiet hour or two, so that I could go to sleep and rest. It seems to me as if I had not rested since I left France."

"Oh! Your Excellency," said Marcelle, addressing her. "If you had sat, as I have done, by the little spring that rises in the hill near the cabin, with my dog at my feet, the sound of the bubbling water filling my ears with laughter and gaiety, the roll of the lake of the Hurons coming to me through the forest, when, as the wind freshened in the afternoon, the waves would fall heavily upon the shore, splashing high against the rocks, as they say the sea does—"

"And you have never seen the sea?" exclaimed Madame de Frontenac, in amazement. "How strange never to have seen the ocean. I cannot fancy never having seen the ocean. I do not know what it would be like."

"But, my dear," said Frontenac. "What appeals so strongly to Marcelle and to me—indeed, to all who have travelled by land and water in Canada—is the mystery of the unknown. The country you see is, as we French people say, unexplored. It extends to the west farther than the utmost limit of Russia does with us to the east. To the north it is equally limitless. What there is in all this vast extent beyond the little that we know of the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the country of the Algonquins and of the Hurons, and of that to the south, inhabited by

the English, the Dutch and their allies, is like a cavern of unsounded depth hidden in impenetrable darkness, and holding we know not what of the wonderful in the animal and mineral world."

"Truly, Louis, you are eloquent when you speak of this new province of the King," said his wife, admiringly. "I have often wondered what lay far to the west, farther than any yet have gone."

"That would be hard to say, my dear. Mountains, probably, and vast lakes again, rivers and forests."

"But men, I mean. What sort are they? Like the terrible Iroquois, or more peaceable and less given up to war and the horrors of burning and slaying," said Madame de Frontenac.

"The Sioux live there, or Dacotahs, as they are called. They are more terrible even than the Iroquois, it is said. They have not the same fantastic desire to make war for the sake of glory and revenge as the Iroquois, but more from brutal savagery and the desire to slay. They have not the high sense of honor of our eastern Indians, nor the same deep-seated gratitude which makes the memory of an Indian a proverb, and a shame to the white man's."

"Yes, I know one, a Montagnais, like that," continued Madame de Frontenac. "He was old, very old, and had once been a chief, they said. But when he came to the kitchen he looked very little like a chief—more like a beggar, and yet, after all, the twice or more times that I saw him there was something so natural and polite about him that I supposed he must

have been at one time servant to a French gentleman, or, perhaps, a habitant."

"The true Indian," said Frontenac, "is a gentleman by nature. He has the instincts of nobility, which we must confess, after all, alone constitute the title. While we boast of a line of ancestors, with links of greatness and strength at long intervals, which keep the name and glory of the house alive, in Indian heraldry the bad or cowardly warrior forfeits his right and title to distinction, until by some daring or meritorious exploit he is allowed to take it up anew. Indians are the knights-errant of the new continent, and while they are not girt in steel, nor are they surrounded with attendants and the pomp of knighthood, their barbaric dress is not less picturesque, and, to be just, it indicates much greater courage. It requires more boldness to fight without armor than with it. As to their treatment of the poor, there is nothing like it in the history of the world. It is accounted amongst them a disgrace if a brave, strong, and able to hunt, should revel in plenty while others starve. So keenly is the duty felt of providing for the weak, that a warrior will give all he has rather than eat while the weak, unable to provide for themselves, go without. There is no contemptuous throwing of largess, which, after all, is more a tribute to the grandeur and vanity of the giver than a desire to help the poor wretches who receive the alms. Amongst the Indians, as I am told—and, indeed, from what I have seen, it is well worthy of credence—the

spirit is not that of vanity on the part of the giver, but of shame that he should think of doing otherwise."

"But their treatment of their squaws!" remonstrated Madame de Frontenac.

"They do not ill-treat their squaws, with few exceptions," replied her husband. "The women work because they wish to do so. It is a disgrace in their eyes that their warrior husbands should tarnish their fame in war with common toil. Then remember, my dear, that white women have been known to leave their own kindred and become the wives of the Iroquois, the Hurons and other well-known tribes, and nothing could induce them afterwards to change or reverse their choice. This preference for Indian life seems strange to us, but it has its fascinations of which we do not dream. Except for the thin veneer of what we call civilization, we are all savages or children of nature still. While, however, the women are not to be admired so much as the men, nothing can excel the dignity and figure of an Indian of the pure blood."

"The horrible tortures which they inflict upon their victims—"

"There, again, is a common mistake. It is intended as a tribute to their courage. If the victim quail it is a triumph for the conquerors, and a disgrace to the conquered. If he die heroically they worship him as a sort of god who has shed lustre upon his tribe."

As Frontenac finished his praise of the Indian he might have noticed, had he looked, the heightened

color and sparkling eye of Marcelle, who had listened with gratification to his glowing description of the virtues of her mother's race. But he was pondering upon new plans for the conquest, in war or peace, of the Iroquois at the very moment when he was praising them so highly. He knew, if others did not, or had not yet realized it, that the ultimate dominion of North America lay with the side upon which this ferocious confederacy should cast its weight. How true were his conclusions history has since fully demonstrated.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It was part of Frontenac's policy always to keep in touch with his enemies, not simply by means of an odious system of spies, which no man availed himself of less, but through the services of suave and capable agents who had power to make pretty much what terms they chose, so far as they were required to gain the main object in view. Had it not been for the stupidity and jealousy of his rivals he would never have suffered the indignity of a recall, and it spoke equally well for his generosity and sagacity that he should have yielded to the request of the King and should have once more assumed his difficult and thankless position as Governor-General of New France. The utter failure of his successor showed the great value of the man who had been deposed, and now that he had been restored to his position he was not long in bringing again into play the policy which, had it been followed out in the first instance, would have brought about long since the important results at which he aimed. It had always been Frontenac's design to take advantage of the internal jealousies of the Iroquois. In accordance with the disdainful independence of the Indian character, the Mohawks at one end of the line of five confederates, and the Senecas at the other, made war with whom

and when they chose; nor were their allies in between much less inclined to suit their own tastes, although hitherto the confederacy itself had never been wholly set at naught by the members of it, or its solidarity endangered.

Word had been received by Frontenac from one of his roving agents in the west that the Iroquois intended once more to go down the Richelieu. Major Beauharnais on leaving Quebec directed his course to the west, and having ascended the Ottawa, threw out spies towards the country to the south, well knowing that if it was the intention of the Senecas to descend upon the colony by way of the Ottawa and to join the Mohawks upon the St. Lawrence, no better plan than despatching scouts over a wide area to the south could be adopted, while if these two tribes were not in sympathy, the jealous Senecas might be induced to interfere and to betray their rivals. Till well away from Quebec he had had no escort other than a single canoeman, since he did not wish to excite the suspicion of lurking Iroquois spies, who often ventured within sight of the river and for days kept ceaseless watch upon the main line of travel between Montreal and the capital of the colony. To such as these he would appear as an ordinary fishermen trying his luck. At Montreal he had procured two canoes and six additional men, all of whom were scouts of experience and known fidelity. Having ascended the Ottawa to a point unknown to the average traveller, and, indeed, to himself hitherto, except as the geographical centre of a series of routes

from the south, the west and the north, along which or in between which the Iroquois would travel if they intended coming by the Ottawa at all, he drew up and cached, as they say of things hidden, his provisions and canoes, and despatching his scouts in different directions, passed his time in patiently waiting for their return. At such a season, when the duck were beginning to come in, it was a piece of great self-denial for him to refrain from firing his fowling-piece, but knowing that to do so would be death to his plans and probably to himself as well, he contented himself with fishing and watching the river for canoes. One day, as he sat cooking a trout over a fire of hawthorn twigs, which, being dry, gave off no smoke, one of his scouts returned in all haste with the news that a large party of Mohawks and Senecas in full war-paint were on their way down the Chicto, a small tributary of the Ottawa, which joined it at a point below that where Beauharnais had established his headquarters. To delay action meant the failure of his mission, and having cut a few characters in the bark of a young sapling to inform the other scouts when they came in that he had seen Iroquois and had gone on to warn the Canadians, he set out for Carillon and Montreal, both he and his companion paddling with all haste. It was a matter of some doubt to them as to whether the Iroquois would not reach the Ottawa River first, but on passing the mouth of the Chicto they assured themselves that such could not have been the case. As they passed Carillon they were met by one of the scouts who had narrowly escaped falling into the

clutches of another large party, whose destination, he had found, was Trois Rivières. Detailing this scout to go on to Montreal and to notify them of the threatened danger to that city, Philippe Beauharnais ran ashore at the first suitable spot, and hiding the canoe, began with his companion the overland journey to Trois Rivières. Having arrived there in a state almost of exhaustion, the habitants and villagers were called within the shelter of the palisades and prompt measures for defence were taken. Meanwhile, Beauharnais sent an Indian runner to Frontenac, with the result, as we have seen, of a party being despatched under St. Just to succor Trois Rivières.

True to the information brought in to Beauharnais by his scouts, the Iroquois appeared, and when the first of them were seen furtively advancing in the manner peculiar to Indians, the outposts of the garrison moved in and gradually fell back upon the palisades.

"There are seven hundred," said Marchand, the commandant, to Beauharnais, with an oath, as he returned to his quarters after a tour of inspection. "Unless His Excellency dispatches at least one hundred men well armed, and with all speed, we shall be overwhelmed."

"It looks ominous," said Beauharnais. "Your provisions, you say, are light."

"Mon dieu! Who would have expected the Iroquois at this time when His Excellency has almost concluded a treaty."

"You can't conclude a treaty with them," rejoined Beauharnais.

"No; there I agree. The English and the Dutch forbid that, and the Iroquois know, too, that they hold the balance of power."

"Are the women all in?" asked the commandant of an orderly who entered.

"No; the widow Benoit and her daughter have not yet had time."

"Tell Sergeant Villiers to take three men and go to meet them."

"Better still," interposed Beauharnais; "why not send word to them to go down to the river? Then they will be sure to be picked up by our party from Quebec.

"Good," assented Marchand. "Yes, tell them that, and see that a runner is sent to them this time."

The sound of firing reached their ears. Marchand jumped to his feet. "Come, Beauharnais; it is time to man the defences."

Soldiers and civilians were running to their stations as the officers emerged from the barracks. The Indians, having seen that a surprise was impossible, had determined upon a sudden attack. Already the assault was being seriously maintained. Marchand and Beauharnais stood in a conspicuous place to receive reports and give orders.

"It is like a thunderstorm," exclaimed Marchand, as the Indians burst upon the gates and threatened every moment to carry them by the sheer weight and fury of their onset. That part of the village which was without the walls had been set on fire, and the smoke of the burning houses blew thickly over the defenders of the stockade, and under cover of it more

than one of the Iroquois climbed the palisade and leaped to his death below. The war-cries of the red men resounded everywhere on the land side of the fort. So far the defence had been effective, but a new danger now arose. A large detachment of the enemy had taken to their canoes and were paddling rapidly to assail the fort from the western or water side. As Marchand and Beauharnais looked at the women and children, who were huddled together in the middle of the square, and behind sheds and storehouses, they shuddered to think of the death that awaited them if this new move should be pursued with vigor.

"We have not the men to spare," said Marchand, in desperation.

"But—what is that?" and seizing Beauharnais by the arm he pointed to the river.

"It is our men," said Beauharnais, quietly. "You had better tell the people—"

"And the soldiers."

"Yes, it would be just as well."

Soon women in a frenzy of hope and despair were climbing up wherever they could gain foothold to see if help were really coming.

Meanwhile Marchand and Beauharnais had run to resist the new attack. A scream of joy arose from the women and children as their lookouts confirmed the news. They waved their aprons and their kerchiefs to the canoemen, but it was needless. The smoke of burning houses had been seen afar off and had told its tale. At this moment a gate upon the northern side of the palisade was unexpectedly driven

in. Beauharnais was instantly at hand. He engaged a stalwart warrior who bounded at him, swinging his tomahawk and yelling with savage triumph. But the fight was of short duration, and Beauharnais, withdrawing his sword, turned to meet the attack of others.

The relieving party landed close to the walls and rushed to the assistance of the garrison. With their aid the Iroquois were finally beaten off; but the approach of night was viewed with anxiety. The Mohawks had pushed the siege with great dash and courage, and had lost heavily, owing to the use of firearms at close quarters by the garrison. During the early hours of evening the relief party, in common with the soldiers of the garrison and all those capable of bearing arms within the stockade, were stationed at regular intervals in a circle about those women and children who, for lack of space, could not be placed within the stone walls of the fort. About midnight the alarm was given that another assault was about to begin, but so skilfully had the disposition of the troops been made that beyond the destruction of the remaining houses outside the walls nothing serious was accomplished. The use of the deadly arquebuse had proved effectual, and when the light of day once more illumined the scene of desolation and disquietude it was found that the Iroquois had departed as noiselessly as they had come, discouraged by their losses, and, no doubt, by the fact that they had failed to take the garrison by surprise. Scouts were sent out into the woods in every direction to investigate, but not an Iroquois remained, and it became evident

that they had gone either to join their brethren before Montreal or to take part in a venture that gave greater promise of success at less cost. The delight of the inhabitants of Trois Rivières at the announcement of their departure made itself manifest in extravagant exhibitions of joy, and all alike, men and women and children crowded about Philippe Beauharnais to thank him, with tears and embraces, for their deliverance. In the history of the colony, in no case had so serious an attack by Indians been so promptly and effectually met, and without doubt had Trois Rivières suffered annihilation at the hands of the Iroquois it would have set back the clock of French dominion by a quarter of a century. The part played by Beauharnais further ensured the friendship and favor of one who already regarded himself as in debt to him.

The raising of the siege was followed by the return of the relieving party to Quebec, after ample arrangements had been made to aid the inhabitants of Trois Rivières in reconstructing their burned dwellings. As the canoes approached the city, gliding swiftly along upon the current of the noble river, in the full splendor of the noonday sun, the signal gun of the fort was fired. The populace turned out *en masse* to welcome Beauharnais and his men, for already the news had become general of the defeat of the Iroquois and of the gallant rescue of the people of Trois Rivières, many of whom had relatives at the capital.

Frontenac, who never missed an opportunity of showing publicly his appreciation of services rendered to the state, clad in the brilliant uniform of a general

of the French army, and escorted by his body-guard and members of his household, rode through the city towards the landing-place. Marcelle, who rode beside him, sat her horse with the ease and grace of the natural horsewoman. Beauharnais blushed with pleasure at the sight of one so dear to him. Nor was Marcelle herself unaffected by the valor and devotion of one whom she was learning to regard from day to day more as a friend than merely a convenient instrument of Frontenac's colonial policy.

"You are deserving of every praise, Beauharnais," said Frontenac, as the young officer came forward to acknowledge the King's representative and to conform to the usual ceremonies attendant upon such a cordial greeting. "As for Marcelle, she has been even more concerned than I. You need not blush," he added, playfully, turning towards her. "It is the greatest reward we can bestow upon our worthy subject, and you will permit it? Eh?"

Though perceptibly confused by Frontenac's public avowal of the bethrothal, Marcelle, not to be ungrateful for past favors, smiled encouragingly upon Beauharnais, as he contrived to glance at her from his position near His Excellency.

"St. Just, too, is worthy of honorable mention. Come, Captain St. Just; march your men to barracks and dine with us this evening. Now, Beauharnais, mount your horse and let us away."

It was evident that Frontenac was in good spirits, but he would have been a bold man, or a still bolder woman, who would have crossed him even at such a time.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

If there was one thing more than another likely to please His Majesty the King, it was the announcement of a wedding in New France. The subtleties of theological controversy and of official diplomacy all had to be endured, in His Majesty's opinion as the necessary evils of human life and of international complications; but the setting up of a new home in his favorite province, as New France always continued to be, was so positive a sign of progress, stability and content in the new continent, that it ranked with the most gratifying achievements of his reign. It was not altogether a mere matter of routine or of reward for a favorite courtier, therefore, that prompted Frontenac to be so persistent in his efforts to persuade Marcelle that she should yield to the addresses of the heir of Beauharnais and consent to marry him. We have before pointed out how anxious Louis was to establish the monarchical and feudal system of France upon a sound and enduring basis in Canada. His solicitude for the welfare of the Canadian noblesse was prompted by the desire of seeing these systems flourish as in their native clime. Amongst the commonalty, marriage was made the occasion of a large royal bounty, while, on the other hand, bachelorhood was regarded after a certain age as a crime against the state, and as such

severely punishable by law. Amongst the noblesse, rewards and punishments were of a different and more exalted character, and while the poverty-stricken noble would, under ordinary circumstances, have shrunk from matrimony as a road to certain ruin, under these considerations he welcomed it as a passport to wealth and royal favor. That the quiet persistence of Frontenac should seem to Marcelle a sign of deep-seated and unwavering, if not cruel, determination upon his part, was unavoidable. It wore upon her, and sometimes in the quiet of retirement her heart rebelled and she would give way to a burst of sudden weeping and defiance. But in the presence of their Excellencies it was otherwise, and she gave no outward evidence of her true feelings beyond these mild, if not the less definite, expressions of opinion.

To Frontenac, on the other hand, persistence was but the part of duty. Women, in his opinion, needed the guiding and controlling power of men to move them, like ships at sea, in the right direction. It lay in his power to compel Marcelle, and if she would not yield to persuasion, and do as she clearly ought, he considered that it would be, not only his duty to the King, but to her as well, that he should bring stronger pressure to bear. But to Frontenac's gratification, Marcelle made no further objection to his matrimonial plans. Beauharnais was summoned and the wedding-day appointed.

"To you, Marcelle, I leave the task of asking the Bishop to officiate," said Frontenac, after Beauharnais' departure. "I fancy that it will be more pleasing to

His Lordship than if I should myself make the request. Do you not yourself think so?"

"But will Your Excellency not say to him that I have your permission to do so?"

"It is true, my dear girl, that his punctiliousness might take offence if it were not by my expressed sanction. Madame de Frontenac, therefore, shall go with you to deliver it. If it need more, then I shall go myself, but my wife is a better diplomatist than I."

Madame de Frontenac smiled amusedly. "You men are all obsequiousness when begging favors. What shall I say to Monseigneur? Had I, too, not better leave it to Marcelle?"

"I beseech Your Excellency to do it," said Marcelle, addressing Madame de Frontenac. "His Lordship, as you will remember, granted me permission to receive the addresses of Major Beauharnais, and it is not to be supposed that he would now refuse to marry us. If Your Excellency asks, it would please him. Of that I am sure."

"You are almost as good a diplomatist as my wife," said Frontenac, laughing. "I quite plainly see that in affairs of the heart it is best to leave it all to the ladies. Come, Marcelle, since that is resolved upon, sing for me one of those chansons du crépuscule. It is a suitable hour."

Marcelle took her guitar from the window-corner and ran her fingers over it doubtfully; then, as if having at last made up her mind, she began to sing. But it was the "Hymn to the Virgin" which she sang. The pathos and prayer of both music and

words trembled at first upon her lips, and then as her soul poured forth its longing, the room was filled with melody. She finished and a sigh escaped her. Madame de Frontenac looked up in slight astonishment, but Frontenac, who was intent upon his thoughts, asked again for one of the chansons.

"Which one, Your Excellency?" asked Marcelle.

"'La Silence du Soir,'" he said. "I know no sweeter song?"

Marcelle had sung this sweet song of twilight once before for Frontenac, and it had been hard for her to repress her tears. But now the twittering of the young birds in the nest, when one by one they "peeped" a note or two and then nestled for the night under their mother's wing, the lonely sighing of the wind, that rose and fell with plaintive melancholy, and then, at last, the house in the forest, recalled so vividly her own sweet home by the great lake of the Hurons that her efforts to sing it were in vain. The weight of sorrow lay too heavily upon her heart.

"Do let it be 'La Voix du Carillon,' Your Excellency. It is not so sad, and then it suits my wedding-day," she added, with forced playfulness.

"Whatever suits your wedding-day we shall welcome, Marcelle, and if I could sing it should be a merry song, I assure you." And Frontenac spoke with more than his usual earnestness.

This song, sparkling as it is with the movement of the waters as they leap and bound in the rapids of the Long Sault, suited Marcelle's condition of mind.

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Frontenac, as she finished. "I see as I never saw before what the feeling of the

native-born in Canada is. One must breathe the air of New France in childhood. It almost amounts to a frenzy with you, Marcelle."

"Yes, Your Excellency. But I do not know how I shall like it when the country is filled with people, as Madame de Frontenac says it will be some day."

Frontenac laughed at her apprehension. "You need not fear that this land is at all likely to be taken up by *censitaires* and *noblesse*. It is a long way from that yet. I wish I could assure His Majesty that it were so."

"While you two are discussing the condition of the country I will spin—that is, if Marcelle is not going to sing again," said Madame de Frontenac. But Marcelle pleaded to be excused.

Frontenac leaned back in his chair and sighed. "It will be necessary, then, for me to think of the new miracle," he said.

"What is that?" asked Madame de Frontenac, earnestly.

"Has not Father Delaurier told you?"

"No, nothing."

"Ah, well. That is because the Bishop has not yet published it from the altar."

"But you will tell us?" urged his wife.

"It is of Latise Bérac," replied Frontenac. "She is very pious and good. She lives in the parish of Saint Thérèse, and has written prayers upon images of the Virgin. The defeat of the Iroquois at Trois Rivières is ascribed to her, because she gave a poor woman there one of these, with a prayer against the Iroquois especially."

"She must be very good," said Madame de Frontenac, with admiration.

"Yes," said her husband, casually. "But it is not the first time. Not being able to read, she gives all her time to fasts and prayers. There is none like her in New France, so it is said."

"But she can write," said Madame de Frontenac, innocently. "Are you sure that she cannot read."

"No," replied Frontenac, curtly. "That is probably another miracle."

"But you have not yet told us all," said Madame de Frontenac.

"It appears," continued her husband, drily, "that demoiselle Latise will give a charm against a black cat for a livre. Against a spitting of blood it is four or less, if you can't pay so much."

"It is wonderful," said Madame de Frontenac.

"Then there is the wood-ranger, who had the fear of death, which haunted him day and night—but here is Philippe. Come in, Philippe, we are glad to see you. Marcelle has been singing, but we cannot prevail upon her to sing again. Now, even you will admit that that is hard. Yet there are other things for us to think about. To-morrow Her Excellency with you both will, if there be no obstacle, proceed to the cathedral for your betrothal. That will please His Lordship. It will be a public announcement by him of the wedding and of the day chosen for it. The people who will attend will begin to get their dresses made, and I shall see to it that there will not have been a grander wedding in New France and one better suiting the will of His Majesty."

CHAPTER XXIX.

How to bring the nefarious plan which they had matured to a successful ending was more than Madame Béranger and Sophie Benoit could for the moment think out. All their machinations would be useless if they did not produce upon the mind of Marcelle's self-constituted guardian the impression so desired. Yet who would venture to tell him. Not Sophie Benoit, for full of venom as she was she did not care to run the risk of Frontenac's possible displeasure. Her accomplice at last yielded to the necessities of the case and resolved to undertake the painful duty. That she was an enemy to Marcelle all who were in any way connected with life at the court were well aware. Gossip seldom remains idle when once started; nor did it in this case. Various insinuations of the kind proposed had been set afloat in the air, but as yet none of them had reached either His Excellency's ears, or those of his amiable, if somewhat suspicious, spouse. The sight of Major Beauharnais' continued attentions to the "Halfbreed," as Madame Béranger called her, at last maddened that good lady beyond endurance. With all the stiffness and formality that "hedged" the representative of the French King on ceremonial occasions, as on all others, there was a freedom about Frontenac and about life at the Château that made it easy for

those who had the *entrée* to take advantage of their privilege and extend their intimacy. When the splendor of such demonstrations as those of the levées and receptions had been laid aside till other such occasions, those friends at court who were expected to conform punctiliously to the most minute requirement of court etiquette were given a respite.

It was a bold stroke, but Madame Béranger resolved to make it—the dropping of a billet-doux within the Château in such a manner as to ensure its reaching Her Excellency. Madame Béranger was shrewd enough to see that a torch of this kind could kindle a fierce blaze. It had been whispered behind the curtains and in the corridors of the Château that, gentle as she was, Madame Frontenac had never been quite pleased with the romantic adoption of the child of the wilderness by her headstrong husband. It was the knowledge of these rumors that suggested the present plan. Attempts to circulate tales of impropriety, founded on Madame Béranger's conversation with the Company's employe, had failed. A more desperate measure, therefore, had been needed and resolved upon. Madame Béranger knew that Friday was sweeping day at the Château, for it was sweeping day with all careful Canadian housekeepers, and they had copied the present occupants of the Château in choosing that day.

The tête-a-tête in Madame de Frontenac's boudoir had been altogether to her satisfaction. Madame Béranger had brought Her Excellency news of a capable housemaid. Servants were not scarce, but capable servants were hard to get. It was a kind act on Madame Béranger's part, and Her Excellency im-

pressed upon her her opinion of the inestimable value of the service rendered.

"Marcelle will be so delighted," she said.

Madame Béranger banished instantly a sudden inclination to be nervous, and paid Marcelle a compliment.

"She is so lovely," she exclaimed, in admiration.

"And better still, so sweet," assented Madame de Frontenac.

"What an ornament to the Château!"

"Quite. We certainly should not know what to do without her," added Her Excellency.

"You have been so kind to her."

"Not more than she deserves, I assure you."

"Everybody is lost in admiration."

"It is, on the contrary, so kind of the dear child to live with us."

"Well, it ought not to be, but then, of course, her life in the wilderness was so free and untrammelled."

"Yes, of course, it must have been. But her manners are so perfect."

"Quite, as Your Excellency says."

"You will go with me to the cathedral? We meet to-morrow, you know."

"So we do, Your Excellency. I will, of course, be ready."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye," saying which Madame Béranger softly glided into the corridor and the semi-darkness left by the closing of Madame's door. Slipping her hand into her pocket she drew forth the uncanny missive and dropped it behind a portière that as usual lay drawn

and folded against the wall. With a sigh of relief she walked quickly past the servant at the door and reached the street. She could scarce restrain her feet from hurrying her to Sophie Benoit. But no, it would excite suspicion, or might do so. No one must connect her with the crime. Marcelle would receive her deserts and be taught that she had better have stayed in the wilderness, where an abandoned life might be led with impunity. Such thoughts as these ran through the mind of Madame Béranger till she at last reached Sophie's door.

"It is done!" she said, in a hoarse and exultant whisper, in Sophie's ear.

But Sophie must have the details; and how they rejoiced over the success of their plan! It would be necessary now to do nothing but wait. Time would hatch what they had placed in the nest.

"But do you think Frontenac will believe it?" asked Sophie, hopefully, when the full story had been told.

"Of course!" cried Madame Béranger, emphatically, and growing prouder of her achievement. "The servants will carry it to Madame, you may be sure. With all her amiability she is suspicious, and when she is roused, my good Sophie, she does things most inconsistent, as you say, with her sweet smile and pretty teeth."

"Inconsistent," said Sophie, scornfully; "I should think she is. She gets credit for a lot more than she does, but if she packs that witch off, bag and baggage, we will give her all the credit she deserves. I am not one to grudge other people what is due them."

"Nor I."

"How are we going to hear about it?"

"Frontenac will be angry."

"Well?"

"Why, then, it will all come out. The servants will tell it all over Quebec."

"They dare not. Besides, we ought to hear of it soon. I am anxious."

"Never mind. I have arranged all that. Josephine, who sweeps out the upper back hall, is a sister of Marie Lebrun's, and she will tell Marie, and Marie will be over at my house in one minute afterwards. Isn't it lovely?"

"Isn't it?" assented Sophie; "and no one will know that we—that you had anything to do about it."

"Frontenac will kill her."

"I believe he will."

"Then the other story will get about."

"How lovely! Really, Sophie, you have a brain to plan."

"Well, if I have, you have the one to carry it out."

"Yes, I am not so bad at that."

"Hush!"

"What do you hear?"

"Par Los, I thought I heard His Excellency's voice."

"Are you frightened?"

"Not I," said Madame Béranger, haughtily. "I could commit murder to gain my ends; that is, if someone stands between me and my rights."

"I could commit two," added Sophie, who wanted it understood that she was just as bold as the other.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE state of trade in New France, if such, indeed, it could ever have been called with any regard for the proper use of the term, was not unlike that of a child afflicted with what physicians call pernicious anæmia. The paternal system of government, by which everything emanated from the King, who read his correspondence in the apartments of his famous favorites, and decreed what the replies should be pretty much as those favorites suggested, did not succeed in stimulating to healthy activity trade between France and her colony. An inferior system of pilotage in the river deterred to a certain extent French merchants from sending goods to Canada, since it was by no means certain that they would ever reach their destination. Then there was no plan of marine insurance in vogue, and this deficiency added considerably to the risk of venture. Pay in specie, too, was practically an impossibility, since no matter how often it might be imported into the colony it was impossible to keep it long in circulation there. It found its way back to France with promptness and regularity. Amidst the complaints and jealous bickerings which characterized Canadian clerical and official life, it had been always a matter of chief importance to the rival sides that one or the other should score in the estimation of the

King. Frontenac, however, never forgot his duty to the colony, and at all times sought to stimulate the industry of the people, both citizen and habitant, in order that they might in time learn to spin and weave, and to make shoes and other articles of clothing, and generally to provide themselves with what, as a civilized people, they should require; otherwise, in view of the doubtful state of trade, he foresaw that they might of necessity have resort to the leathern costumes of the coureurs-de-bois, if not to the even more scanty costume of the Indians themselves. With this end in view, an attendant was despatched to the habitants' cabins to give orders for the making of a number of articles of use and ornament, which His Excellency intended to present to Philippe Beauharnais and his young wife when they were ready to begin housekeeping. The finer articles of apparel and ornament were, as we have seen, always imported into Canada from the art and industrial centres of France, but the productions of the genius of the sons and daughters of the habitants were not to be despised in the carving of wood, the making of clothes for servants, and in the manufacture of wooden vessels such as were required about the farm-houses attached to the seigneurs' demesnes.

A cabin built of heavy logs overlapping crosswise at the four corners, thickly plastered with a tough clay, thatched as we have seen the cabin of Black John was, and covered with a native creeper, overspreading even the roof in its wild luxuriance, was the habitation of Jean Ladoit, a humble habitant. The cabin

stood near the south shore of the St. Lawrence, at the shore end of the feudal holding, which ran in a narrow strip some distance back towards the interior. For this Jean paid three capons and a dozen of eggs yearly to the seigneur, Guillaume Narignon, who, besides being a gentleman by royal patent, kept shop and dealt in tallow candles, hempen cloth, sabots and anything and everything likely to be of use to his neighbors in their vocations of farming and trapping the beaver. The habitant had, on a former occasion, attracted the attention of the Governor by his persistence in remaining upon his holding at a time when rumors of the coming of the Iroquois had frightened his neighbors into leaving their farms and hurrying for refuge to Quebec and Montreal. His brave example had had an excellent effect upon the refugees, who, instead of cowering under the guns of the forts in mortal dread for an indefinite length of time, grew ashamed when the Iroquois did not come and Jean Ladoit still continued to hold his ground. Indeed, it was doubtful if any crops would have been put in during that whole summer along either bank of the St. Lawrence had it not been for this incentive; therefore, Frontenac was only too glad of the opportunity to give the deserving habitant a share of his patronage.

"There will be seven carved chairs for the entrance-hall," said Michel Ambroise, His Excellency's messenger.

"So many!" exclaimed Jean, in astonishment. "I cannot make them in the time. I have but four."

"True, you have but four yourself, yet you can buy the other three, and sell them over again," said Ambroise, smiling.

"Eh? I can? Then I will do it. It is a good profit His Excellency sends me," said Jean, gratefully.

"Then we shall want a bale of hempen cloth—"

"Ah! stop! It is impossible. There is not one bale in all New France."

"Go away, Jean. You can weave it."

"No," said Jean, emphatically, for he was too honest to undertake what he could not carry out.

"But your neighbors?" remonstrated Ambroise.

"Yes," said Jean, thinking deeply, and scratching his head; "it would give them all work."

"Of course it would, and see to it that it is done. Do not disappoint His Excellency."

"Never!" said Jean, bowing at the mention of the Governor's name. "It shall be done."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Ambroise, patronizingly, "and now for a birchbark—just big enough for two. It is intended for the honeymoon."

"But there is the seigneur," remonstrated the habitant, "he has two, and they are so beautiful."

By this time Jean was overcome with the number and extent of His Excellency's orders. He declined utterly to touch the canoe. In fact, he was doubtful about the hemp. But for the chairs—they should be ready, if he had to work night and day. When the messenger departed Jean sat down to think the affair carefully over. He had thirteen children, for whom he had received the King's bounty. They had been romp-

ing merrily in front of the cabin when the messenger arrived, but had shrunk quietly away on his approach to the cabin. Now, however, they burst into the cabin, through the back door, like an avalanche from the hillside. Jean was distracted. He called to his wife.

"Lisbeth! Lisbeth! Come and take these noisy ones away. It is impossible for me to work. I cannot think."

A short stout woman appeared at his summons, her loose sleeves tucked up at the elbow, and her wooden shoes clattering on the hard clay floor.

"What do you wish?" she asked, in her Breton tongue, for she followed the dialect of her father, who had been one of the sea-folk of Brittany.

"I have an order from Monsieur the Governor-General," said Jean.

"Oh!" she said, but that was all, as if her faculties had suddenly failed her.

The children were circling around their mother in a frenzy of playfulness. The house was completely topsy-turvy. Jean put his head in his hands and wept. It was too much.

Leaving this scene of happiness and confusion we will follow the messenger along the shore. He had shoved off, and for a time sat steadying his canoe in the current, as he thought of what he should do about the birchbark. The suggestion of Jean that he should visit the Seigneur de Marchandise, he had no intention of adopting. His orders were to patronize the habitants or peasantry, and these he was

bound to carry out. As he gave his canoe an extra drive or two with a few vicious strokes of the paddle, two children appeared upon the shore from behind a bush. They were very pretty, but ran bashfully away as fast as their little legs could carry them. Ambroise called to them lustily, but it was useless. He disembarked, and drew his canoe up. As he walked up the pathway to the cabin door there was a suspicious silence. Rat, tat! A very pretty woman of middle age, demure, and clad in mousselaine, answered his knock.

"You are Madame Archambault?" he asked, politely. Yes, it was she.

"I might have known it; everything is so clean," he continued. "I have an order from Her Excellency for you."

Instantly she was alive to the importance of the occasion. She was famous for her butter and eggs, and on extraordinary occasions had supplied the vice-regal household before.

"I am afraid—," she began, in a soft, low tone.

"Nonsense!" said Ambroise, sternly, "you habitants are all afraid. I do not mean to frighten you, but have you no desire to serve His Excellency?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur."

"Very well. Then on Monday of the week after next—without fail—you will deliver as before at the Château six dozen eggs and one dozen chickens."

"Yes, monsieur."

"And let me see. It is you who has the water-cress?"

"It is, monsieur."

"Very well—a very large bunch of fresh water-cress. Your children are pretty."

The woman looked down at them and smiled.

"Where is your husband?"

"He is at the little whirlpool fishing."

"Does he catch many?"

"Yes, and large," said his wife, brightening up; "sometimes he catches a maskinonge as long as that." She indicated the extreme length by extending her arms.

"Ah! then I will wait, and take one home with me. Where are your butter and eggs. Let me see them."

By this time the urbanity of the distinguished visitor had put Madame Archambault entirely at her ease. She put on her little leathern cap, and, taking the children one by each hand, conducted him over to the dairy, a low house, built of clay, on the side of a hill. A little rivulet, not larger than an elm of ten years' growth, shot out from the face of the hill and fell upon a large rudely-constructed water-wheel, whose buckets, as they filled, toppled over.

"The wheel does the churning for me, as you see, monsieur," she said, pointing to the moss-covered wooden water-wheel.

"That is excellent," said Ambroise, admiringly, "and Archambault made that?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"I will report it to His Excellency. It is the only one in the whole colony. He will be very much inter-

ested when I tell him. Here is Archambault now. Isn't that he at the shore?"

"Yes, it is my husband," said Madame Archambault, proudly. "He will have plenty of fish."

The children had darted off at once upon hearing that their father was coming, and were tearing down the pathway like two mad things.

Seeing the strange gentleman, the habitant advanced bareheaded, his cap dangling in his fingers.

"Where are your fish?" asked Ambroise, introducing himself.

"I have not had good luck to-day, monsieur—only three little maskinonge." He went back to the canoe and lifted them up. They were very pretty and enticing, though small. The messenger struck a bargain with the habitant, who wrapped them up in a bundle of green leaves and put them in the former's canoe.

"You will not forget the eggs, then?" said Ambroise to the woman as he stepped into his craft and shoved out into the river.

"No, monsieur."

"Nor the chickens?"

"No, monsieur."

"Then good-bye. I will tell His Excellency what clever people you are, and about the water-wheel and your pretty children."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A GOODLY company of ladies and gentlemen were taking tea upon the balcony of the Château. It was a typical summer evening. The softness of the air, the clearness and brilliancy of the sky, where countless stars were born at every moment as the chariot of the sun carried him farther and farther upon his way to obscurity; the rising moon, the mellow twittering of the birds in the trees as night drew near, the far call of the loon that lay upon the bosom of the river—all gave token of the loveliness and charm of a Canadian twilight towards the end of summer. It had been the custom of the wife of the Governor of New France, since the first appointment to that office, to give, amongst the more general and lively of her entertainments, something of a more formal and exclusive character, such as a dinner-party in the winter season, or an evening tea, such as we now describe, during the heat of the summer. While they served as occasions of entertainment to the guests, they served also as a means of communicating important information, or, in other words, as a means of forestalling gossip, and of setting on the right path whatever was intended for or might reach the public ear. The wives of the chief officials were invited as a matter of course, but the positions of precedence and public envy were given to

the wives of the Canadian noblesse and to the wives of those interested in commercial ventures of such importance as to warrant their attendance in the interests of the colony. Father Delaurier represented the Church on this occasion, giving indication by his presence that afternoon teas were not under the ban of His Lordship Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier. The hum of voices was suddenly hushed as Captain St. Just, on behalf of His Excellency, rose to make an announcement.

"His Excellency the Governor-General wishes it to be made known to the people of Quebec and Canada generally that the wedding of Marcelle Courtebois, one of the ladies-in-waiting to Her Excellency, and of the personal household of Their Excellencies, with Major Philippe Noel Suspime Beauharnais, son and heir of the Earl of Beauharnais, will, as already unofficially announced, be celebrated at the Cathedral of Quebec, by the Right Reverend Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, Bishop of Quebec and Metropolitan of Canada, upon Wednesday, the fourth day of August, 169—, at the hour of twelve o'clock, noon, to be followed by a déjeuner at the Château St. Louis, and during the evening by a representation of life in Canada. It is requested that this representation shall on no occasion be described or referred to as a play or theatrical stage-setting, since so to do will not only be the circulation of falsehood, but an affront to the civil and ecclesiastical representatives of the King and of the Church."

The reading of this proclamation produced a degree of astonishment amongst the guests such as could

scarcely be conceived at a later date. That the feud which had existed so long between Frontenac and the Bishop should end so happily spoke volumes for the forbearance of the Bishop or for the diplomacy of the Governor.

We have set forth in the foregoing pages the anxiety of Frontenac to impress the King with the success of his Governorship. It would have been patent to a much less astute mind than his that the celebration of the marriage of a member of the vice-regal household by the Bishop without the attending feature of a theatrical entertainment would have been practically to announce to His Majesty that he had surrendered to his implacable opponent on these terms. On the other hand, to have sought the services of a priest of less degree for the ceremony would have shown not less clearly that the Bishop maintained his stubborn attitude, while, also, it was by no means certain that a priest would carry out the commands of Frontenac in this regard if there were afterwards to be a flying in the face of the authority of the Bishop, since, no matter how divergent were the views of the Bishop and many of the clergy on points of ecclesiastical administration, they were of one mind in maintaining the ordinary discipline of the Church. It fact, it was possible for His Lordship to anticipate the celebration altogether by proclaiming an interim interdict, which would of itself arouse a state of feeling that might lead once more to a recall, and who could say that the man recalled would not once more be the civil representative of His Majesty, Frontenac himself?

Having this in view, the stubborn mind of Frontenac yielded so far as to enable him to pay a personal and conciliatory visit to the Bishop.

When His Excellency, in company with a single aide, drove up to the door of the Bishop's palace at an hour fixed by previous appointment, he was received with all the courtesy that became his station, and as he ascended the steps leading to the entrance, there emerged from the hall no less a personage than Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier himself to receive him.

"Your Excellency has found his way to my humble abode after a long interval," said Saint-Vallier, smiling with a complaisance which he could scarcely feel.

"I have come upon an important mission to Your Lordship," replied Frontenac, grasping the extended hand of the Bishop cordially, and kneeling to kiss the episcopal ring, a performance in itself which did much to pave the way for further concessions.

"May I ask Your Excellency to specify to what I am indebted for this signal mark of favor?" said Saint-Vallier, closing the door.

"For many years," replied Frontenac, "there has been a degree of estrangement between the representatives in Canada of the King and the church, which has produced an unhappy feeling in the breasts of all who are loyal to both. No one admires more than I the efforts of your clergy to spread the gospel of Catholic truth amongst the inhabitants of this colony, both the civilized and uncivilized, at all times and in all weather, amidst the fury of the storms of winter

and the torrid heat of summer, and in the face of dangers and privations—nay, I may say of tortures which nothing but the devotion of a martyr could prompt a human being to confront. From time to time, tales of the heroic death of some servant of the Church reaches the ears of the faithful in Quebec, who utter a prayer or two and go upon their usual ways. To the idle and vicious, of which unfortunately we seem to have more than our share in this city, these examples of devotion to the Church convey no lesson. In a word, the events of a period which is producing saints for the calendar of future generations pass by almost unnoticed."

Frontenac paused to take breath and collect his thoughts. The Bishop, who had listened to the glowing words with an interest that amounted to enthusiasm, gave utterance to his approval.

"What Your Excellency has said is but too true. The way of the Church in this distant country is a way of thorns, but as such not an unworthy imitation of the journey of our Blessed Lord Himself to the Cross."

"It is as Your Lordship has said, not an unworthy following of such a supreme event," resumed Frontenac. "Why then should we not have a true and faithful representation of these glorious events for the edification and purifying of our people?"

The Bishop sat back in his chair and fixed his eyes upon his visitor.

"Do you refer," he asked, "to such representations as occurred during the pontificate of the great Hildebrand or of Gregory, where the virtues and sufferings

of the members of the early Church were set up for the better teaching of the people?"

"Without doubt, what I suggest for Your Lordship's approval is of a similar kind, although the events of which you speak are, I regret to say, history unread as yet to me," replied Frontenac, with unassumed humility.

"It would seem as if there were warrant for the suggestion," continued the Bishop, "in the practices of the Bishop of Ardennes, who taught the gospel to the people by just such pious representations as those of which you speak."

"And if it succeeded as you might approve," continued Frontenac, "it might be repeated from year to year. The habitants and Indians would doubtless flock to the representation of events so connected with their religion and with the teaching of the missionaries. Your Lordship is to officiate in person, I believe, at the marriage of Marcelle to Philippe Beauharnais. Would it not be fitting that we should celebrate an event so important in the life of the colony and so pleasing to His Majesty the King by a representation such as we speak of."

The Bishop thought carefully over the suggestion for some time, and then turning somewhat suddenly to Frontenac enquired:

"Would the representation be under my authority or under Your Excellency's?"

"Could we not work together?" suggested Frontenac, and then as an idea occurred to him, "I suppose the Iroquois, the French soldiers and missionaries,

the Montagnais and the other tribes of our vicinity would comprise the *dramatis personæ*, if such I might call them."

"The way to Calvary was attended by such as these. In my own little parish of Lithole once in ten years we held the Passion Play as at Oberammergau. It was of great educational value, and there is no doubt that the introduction of a similar festival into Canada would have a good effect," said the Bishop.

"Have you heard lately from Father Lallemant?" inquired Frontenac.

"Ah! It is the will of Heaven that the true faith shall come to the Iroquois only through fire," exclaimed the Bishop, his face lighting up with joy at the thought of what the devoted priests of the Iroquois mission were permitted to suffer for the cause of Christ. Father Lebrun has passed to his reward. The cruel Iroquois induced him by fair promises to believe that they accepted his words. He built with incredible labor a house of bark in a grove close to the river-bank. After the departure of the Senecas, who declared war against the Illinois, he spent his time amongst the Cayugas, who invited him to settle amongst them. This, however, he refused to do, being anxious to renew his efforts with the Senecas when they returned. Two Indian converts, past the middle age, lived with him, and the Cayugas formed the plan of capturing all three. One evening, just as darkness was closing in, one of the converts, who had gone out to bring up water, saw figures dodging from tree to tree. The dog barked, and Father Lebrun went out

to investigate. After looking about he turned to go into the house again, when a Cayuga fired, and my beloved priest fell dead."

"It is a scandal!" cried Frontenac, with sudden passion. "I have taught these savages a lesson before, and I shall teach them another. Father Lebrun was a Jesuit, and they have not always been friendly to me, but I forgive him. He died in the cause of Christ."

"Amen," said the Bishop solemnly, while he bowed his head in momentary prayer.

"We are then friends once more?" said Frontenac, extending his hand.

The Bishop grasped it affectionately. "This action of yours in visiting me and showing a spirit of contrition and forgiveness restores you to my heart and to the full confidence of the clergy. As Her Excellency and Marcelle have asked me to officiate, and as you have confirmed it, I shall gladly solemnize the sacrament of their marriage."

Delighted beyond measure at the success of his mission to the Bishop, rendered necessary by the baffling complications of the civil, military and ecclesiastical administrations of his government, Frontenac took his departure with the speed and enthusiasm of a man much younger in years, and re-entering the Château flung himself into a chair to straighten out the thread of his new policy, which impressed him alike with its present result and its promise for the future.

"I shall not, however, have a Passion Play. His Lordship is mistaken. My plays have been for the

entertainment and education of my officers and the ladies of my household. Then, too, I cannot leave it to the management of the clergy. I must continue to be my own master," and thus, as Frontenac reflected, the old spirit of haughty independence revived in him till the last trace of the recent reconciliation gradually vanished from his mind. That this unhappy ending of the interview should lead to further misunderstandings and ill-feeling was inevitable.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE afternoon had worn itself away in a variety of unexpected happenings. A message was brought just as the sun was setting to Onontio, as Frontenac was termed by the Iroquois in his capacity of governor, from the Mohawks, that if he would cause one of their number at present a prisoner in the hands of the French at Montreal to be delivered up to them they would make peace for one year, and leave the French in undisturbed repose. To the Indians of all races Frontenac had always been a foeman worthy of their steel, feared and yet, at the same time, held in their high esteem as the greatest of all those who had been sent from France to rule the dominions of the French King.

"Bring the messenger before me," cried Frontenac, and in prompt response to his order a cringing specimen of the Abenaqui tribe was brought into the room.

"You are not a Mohawk nor an Iroquois," exclaimed Frontenac, in astonishment.

"Abenaqui," said the Indian, who understood a little French.

"What means this?—the interpreter," demanded Frontenac, his keen eye already in search of hidden meanings and Iroquois mockery. It was as he supposed. The Abenaqui had been caught by a party of roving

Mohawks, who despatched him to Frontenac with a message, threatening him with their most cruel vengeance if he should fail in one jot or tittle of it. As Frontenac meditated with mingled annoyance and amusement upon this not unknown phase of Iroquois wit, the Abenaqui, who till then had stood in mortal dread of the great Governor, volunteered some information of a more startling kind, and quite unprompted by his Mohawk captors. Encouraged by the interpreter, he related as follows: An English woman had been taken in a border raid, and in hope of gaining the leniency of the Indians had told them that an English fleet had left Boston to attack Quebec. At first Frontenac gave no credence to the tale, but as the Abenaqui stood a most severe and searching cross-examination without showing signs of speaking falsely, he was handed over to Major La Montagne, and inquiries set upon foot. Soon word was brought in that a messenger had been sent from Montreal with the same news, that upon leaving Montreal he had run into an advancing storm, which eventually had swamped him and compelled him to swim ashore. Procuring another canoe he had set out once more. The English had set sail, the message ran, and word of it had reached Montreal overland. Their fleet was a powerful one, and every determination had been expressed to take Quebec.

Frontenac at once gave orders to prepare to meet the invaders. St. Just was despatched to Montreal to inform Callières, the governor of that city, that he was to send the eight hundred French regulars, then

quartered there, with all speed to Quebec, under a capable commander. The excitement in the capital soon grew to fever heat. Not only were the soldiers animated with a spirit of zeal and determination that boded well for the safety of their charge, but the people themselves applied in large numbers for arms and ammunition, and when they had secured these they went through the streets singing martial songs and greeting the name of Frontenac with cheers and shouts of approval. To a governor grown old in the service of his king, the loyalty of the people and their affection so displayed was intensely gratifying. It atoned for years of trial and disappointment, and made him feel that he had won at last some small measure of that esteem which is the last reward of noble souls. If there were some amongst the clergy and their dependents who before the alarm of war were nothing loth to give utterance to their detestation of him, now that the shock of battle seemed likely to come at any moment they acclaimed him with the rest. Every effort was made to strengthen and complete the fortifications. From time to time improvements had been begun, and they were now being worked upon with a view to immediate completion. The upper portion of the city stood upon the summit of a seemingly impregnable cliff, whose means of access were securable at a moment's notice. Along the shore of the St. Charles, which at the foot of the great promontory forms a junction with the St. Lawrence and bounds the city upon the eastern side, a line of palisades had been placed,

extending from the Saut au Matelot to a point at the rear of the city. These were reinforced by earthworks and heavy barricades, which, defended by brave men, were capable of withstanding the attack of a large army. In the rear of the city Frontenac had not long before completed a system of defences consisting of trenches with the accompanying earthworks. Large towers built of stone at short intervals furnished additional means of coping with the enemy, as well as opportunities for observing their movements. This line of defences extended from the river St. Charles to the edge of the cliff fronting on the St. Lawrence. At the Saut au Matelot, at the palace gate, and at the windmill and Mount Carmel, batteries of heavy guns were planted, while guns of lighter calibre were held in reserve. The upper part of the city was thus well protected. That part which lay along the strand, consisting of warehouses, magazines, inns, lodging-houses and small shops, was practically at the mercy of an attacking force, since beyond the planting of a few batteries of eighteen and twenty-four pounders it was impossible to take measures for its protection.

While the defences of the city were thus being pushed to completion with feverish energy, official messengers were being despatched in every quarter, calling in the militia and peasantry. When these had gathered, and had been disposed according to the directions of Frontenac, a force of two thousand five hundred men manned the fortifications, while a considerable number were stationed farther

down the river, whose duty it was to prevent a landing. At length everything had been made ready, expectation stood on tiptoe. At all hours of the day eyes were strained in the direction of the Island of Orleans to catch the first glimpse of the enemy's ships as they filed past and prepared to come into position opposite the city. Occasionally a runner would arrive from the Montagnais or other Indian encampment along shore to warn Onontio of the approach of the English. At last the vigilance of the sentinels was rewarded by the appearance, just as the day was breaking, of lights moving in the distance upon the river, and then as the day brightened the long-expected ships appeared.

Upon the crest of the cliff near the Château stood Frontenac, his wife and Marcelle, eager as the rest to catch sight of the fleet of the enemy.

"There," exclaimed Frontenac, with energy, as a ship in full sail rounded the island's point, "you see the proud arrival of the enemies of France! What say you? Shall they take Quebec?"

"Never!" replied the two ladies in a single breath, but their pale cheeks showed how deeply they felt the alarm of the hour.

For a short space of time they continued silently viewing the advance of the war-vessels into the Basin, and then Frontenac turned and spoke to Marcelle:

"You will remember, Marcelle, for I have often told you, how France was saved by the efforts of a brave woman from the inroads of an English king. See to it that, while I am engaged with my officers and

the duties of my position, you inspire the women of the city with your own courage and determination. In all the history of the struggles of our enemies with the forces of our King on this continent there has been nothing equal to their preparation for this attempt. Their mighty ships of war are filled with soldiers, and I am much mistaken if before the siege is raised we shall not have need of all our valor to repel them."

It was not that Frontenac quailed before the task now set him, for no man was braver or more resourceful than he, but he knew that the number of the city's defenders might be a source of weakness as well as of strength to it, since food was scarce and unequal to the demands of a long siege. Privations and hunger, with the usual accompaniment of disease, might do what the English could not do. It was this that occasioned him a certain degree of uneasiness.

Marcelle was not slow to appreciate the necessity of obedience to the command of Frontenac.

"Your Excellency has asked me to do more perhaps than I am able, but it shall not be said that I did not do whatever I could to preserve Quebec from the hands of the heretics."

Frontenac listened to her with admiration, and then, taking her hand in his, he leaned forward and kissed her upon the cheek.

"You blush," he said, half laughingly; "your cheek is like a splash of blood upon the winter's snow;" and then, growing suddenly solemn, "God grant that it may not be so."

Leaving the presence of the white-haired Governor, whose calm and dignified bearing in the face of the impending conflict inspired her with a strong desire to assist in the preservation of her country, Marcelle hastened to her apartments. She called a maid, and bidding her prepare to accompany her through the city, Marcelle dressed herself in street attire, donning, however, in place of the highly-ornamented cloak then worn by ladies, the buckskin blouse which she had worn when first she entered the city, and the beaded cap of the same material, both of which, while not unsuitable to her skirt of lighter material, yet gave her the commanding and half-masculine appearance of a woman of the coureurs-de-bois, which she then desired to assume, since nothing could have the effect upon those of her own caste like the assumption of their dress and bearing. Upon her breast the heraldic totem was, as formerly, plainly in evidence to those who, looking for it, should seek the sign. The city was in a frenzy of excitement, and, in view of the variety of the elements of which its population was composed, likely to break out in disorder. The coureurs-de-bois, in the spirit of recklessness and daring which prompted them to violate all rules of discipline and order, were going about in small bands from inn to inn toasting the King, the Governor, and Jean, their present head or chief, and shouting defiance at the enemy. At any moment they were likely to break loose in further confusion, and as the English had filled their ships' boats with armed men, intending to land them at the first favorable place, a

pêle-mêle attack upon them by the coureurs-de-bois, if it should chance to ensue, would spoil the plan of ambush which had been carefully made, if the English attack should lie, as anticipated, in the vicinity of the St. Charles River. Soldiers and civilians, too, were alike at their mercy, and as Marcelle, followed by her maid, turned into Mountain Street, she came upon a group of them drunk and quarrelling. Standing on one side was Jean Dilbot himself, but making no effort to restore order and decorum. The thundering of the cannon, as the batteries at regular intervals fired at the fleet and upon the approaching boats, and of the reply of the heavy guns of the fleet, had so far produced no effect upon the brawlers, who seemed oblivious to the fact that the attack had already begun. Not even an occasional ball striking against the cliff and falling back upon the houses and into the streets, distracted their attention from their carousal. Marcelle boldly approached, and at the first lull gave the cry of the coureurs which they use in case of dire need. Instantly the shouting and the dancing ceased.

"Who are you?" demanded a tall, dark outlaw who stood a handbreadth above his fellows.

"Marcelle, the daughter of Black John, the coureur de-bois," answered Marcelle, boldly.

"Marcelle!" cried Jean Dilbot, advancing.

"Marcelle!" shouted another and then another, till with a wild cheer for the daughter of the coureur they stood before her all attention, which from her attitude they supposed to be what she desired.

"Coureurs," she said, speaking in a clear, sweet voice "you hear the cannon of the English. Shall they take our blessed country?"

"Never!" they shouted, in a chorus that was not silenced by the breaking forth of a battery overhead.

"Shall it be said that in the hour of danger the coureurs-de-bois knew not how to behave themselves as men, but broke into rebellion and disorder?"

They now listened quietly, and began to be ashamed.

"Then, I tell you, brothers of the forest and of freedom, that you cause our great Frontenac anguish of soul in this hour of trial by your behaviour. I know your kind hearts and your courage. No one knows them better. You saved me once; now save your country, your wives, your children and your religion. Do you wish the English heretics to take possession of your forests and of your lakes and rivers? Then follow me to the Château St. Louis, where you will see the Governor and hear what he commands."

"Bravo! Bravo!" exclaimed Jean Dilbot. "You have done what I, their leader, could not do. They are in earnest now."

"Can you not get the others? Where are they?" asked Marcelle.

"We shall find them if we turn to the left here and reach the Château by St. Anne Street," replied Jean.

"Then let it be done, and in all haste, for I hear the cheering of the soldiers in the distance."

With a certain discipline, and obedience as prompt, if not so precise, as that of the soldiery, the band of

coureurs followed their new leader into St. Anne Street, where in front of the Cabaret Duclos was a still larger number of coureurs shouting and dancing as the others had done, and terrifying the women and children in the neighborhood.

"Halt!" cried Jean, sternly, as his men drew near.

"Coureurs! Attention!" he cried, in a loud and commanding voice.

To them also, as they paused in their madness, Marcelle spoke words of warning, and appealed to to their patriotism and courage.

"We go to Frontenac. Will you not join us?" she cried.

With murmurs of assent and admiration not unmixed with a sense of shame, they saluted her, and falling behind as the others advanced, followed them.

In this way in an incredibly short space of time Marcelle had collected all the coureurs in that quarter of the city, and as it was the quarter containing the greatest number of wine and brandy shops, Jean informed her that not many of those at present in the city could have escaped her.

Silently, but with all possible speed, she led the now quiet and abashed outlaws to the Château, where forming in line they waited the appearance of the Governor.

Upon the balcony at the rear of the Château, glass in hand, watching the enemy's boats in their attempt to extricate themselves from the mud into which they had unwittingly run, and in which they lay exposed to the shots of the fleet, which fell with

increasing frequency into the city, Frontenac was standing when Marcelle approached him.

"What is it, Marcelle?" he asked, calmly.

"The coureurs have been collected and are drawn up in front of the Château awaiting Your Excellency's pleasure. They are prepared to obey orders now."

"Did you do this, Marcelle?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"God bless you!" he exclaimed, fervently; "we need them to ambush the enemy."

Putting down his glass, he accompanied her to the entrance of the Château, where, standing upon the steps, he proceeded to address them:

"At this moment, Frenchmen, our enemies are about to land upon the left bank of the St. Charles river. Between the point of landing and the ford above is a strip of wood and some uneven ground. It is just what is required for an ambuscade such as you Frenchmen of the forest know so well how to lay. You have your leader, the brave Jean. He is ready to conduct you to the spot. Will you fight thus for France? Say, patriots, if you will go?"

With a yell such as might have been heard far out upon the river the coureurs responded in the affirmative, crowding around Jean Dilbot and demanding that he lead them where His Excellency had directed.

"You have done France a good service to-day, Marcelle," said Frontenac, as the coureurs departed on the run for the eastern gate. "Now, go to your room and rest, my child. You looked fatigued and pale from your exertions. Hark! They are cheering. Who—?"

But the remaining words were lost as Frontenac hurried once more to his point of look-out, to which his aides came from time to time for further orders.

"Beauharnais," said Frontenac, as that officer reported for orders, "one of the crises of this attack is at hand. I will lead the charge myself on these heretics with three companies of regulars, when they have driven the coureurs out of ambush, as I expect they will after some loss. Tell your colonel and see that they are ready."

Major Beauharnais, having carried the order of His Excellency, returned to notify him that the men were ready in the square.

"Then I am ready also," said Frontenac, his grey hair streaming in the breeze.

At the head of three companies of the regular soldiers of the garrison, Frontenac marched through the eastern gate, down the steep slope to the shore of the St. Charles, where boats were in waiting to ferry them across. Farther down towards the river's mouth, English troops could be seen endeavoring to land and draw off the attack of the French, in order that their comrades below might the more freely and unopposed attack the city. It was a fateful moment. The coureurs had became engaged just as Frontenac and the French came in sight, and fighting with great courage, were holding the English at bay, and at the same time doing them serious damage. A ball flew close to the head of the gallant Frontenac, who seemed to regard its whistle as a signal for advancing.

"Forward! Frenchmen, forward!" he cried, "and

drive the heretics before you." With a vigorous cheer and equal courage, the French advanced on the double to the edge of the strip of wood on the opposite side of which the scene of conflict lay. At the sight of these reinforcements the New Englanders drew back and reformed with the evident intention of advancing to the charge. But it was too late. Frontenac and his men were upon them apace and drove them down the slope with much loss. Barely half their number reached the boats and succeeded in rowing out of range.

Instead of wasting time in useless attempts to follow the fugitives and continue the battle on the water, Frontenac ordered his men to return, excepting the coureurs, whom, after commending for their valor, he placed once more in the wood to hold the English in check should they again attempt to land. As Frontenac hurriedly recrossed the St. Charles and ascended the right bank, he saw the boats of the fleet rowing rapidly away.

"They will attempt nothing further to-day, La Montagne," said he; "but I am mistaken if old Phipps gives up without a better try than this. It is hard to believe that he ordered so weak an attempt. Yet it was made in force enough. See to it that everything is in readiness for the morrow, and that those ships which are within range of the batteries get no peace. To-day's failure will either discourage or exasperate them."

Just then a messenger on horseback galloped up, and dismounting hurriedly, handed Frontenac a piece of paper.

"This is well, and yet not well, La Montagne. The remainder of the men from Montreal will be here in half an hour. They landed above when the firing was heard and will reach the city overland. Phipps must attack to-morrow or else we shall find means to attack him. We have too many to feed, but not too many to defend our walls."

As darkness fell upon the excited city, every measure was taken which prudence could suggest to guard against surprise. With Marcelle at his side, Frontenac stood at a window of the watch-tower gazing into the blackness of the river, in hope of catching sight of a light if perchance the English sought to land.

"The city is well defended, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, desirous of encouraging him, although his eye gleamed with all the energy of youth and fire of battle.

"Yes, Marcelle, and my mind is greatly relieved that Jean and his men are on guard at our weakest point. Your friends are as watchful as they are brave."

"I am pleased to hear you speak so of them, Your Excellency. They love you as I do, and will die for you."

"Hark!" said Frontenac, starting up from the seat which he had momentarily taken. But the sound was not repeated, and he sat down again with a sigh.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE break of day witnessed a suspension instead of a renewal of hostilities. The discomfiture of the landing-force, brought about chiefly through the aid of the coureurs-de-bois, as we have seen, had a discouraging and a deterrent effect upon the English, who resolved to hold a council of war and of prayer before proceeding further with the plan of attack. Rough weather now, however, added its terrors to the valor of the Canadians, and in view of the danger in waiting, and of the poor prospect of success, Phipps weighed anchor and with his whole fleet took his departure. Beyond the reach of the guns of the fortress, and sheltered by the Island of Orleans from the severity of the weather, the English commander tarried in order to put his ships in condition for the voyage to Boston. But this delay occasioned no alarm in the minds of the Canadians, who had given themselves over to thanksgiving and rejoicing.

"Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier is proceeding to the cathedral in state, Your Excellency, and is preceded by the captured flag," said Philippe Beauharnais, in answer to a question from Frontenac respecting the booming of a great gun.

"The admiral's flag?" exclaimed Frontenac, in astonishment. "Did you gather his meaning from

such an extraordinary action? Has he asked our permission?"

"No, Your Excellency; the success of the defence is ascribed to Saint Anne, the Blessed Virgin and Saint Francois Xavier," replied Beauharnais.

Frontenac's brow contracted into a deep and angry frown. "It is always this way. He will have it that the hosts of Heaven are his especial allies, and that we count for nothing."

"But the people, Your Excellency—"

"Well, what of them?"

"They thank Heaven, too; but they are preparing bonfires in your honor."

"Is it so?"

"Vast quantities of wood have been brought up from below, and the coureurs are making extensive preparations."

"Then there will be disorder. However, if they do not set fire to the city it will not matter. Yet, Beauharnais, it will not do to let this opportunity pass of doing proper honor to His Majesty. The statue of His Majesty in the square might well be carried shoulder high in procession. See to it that this be done."

"And your Excellency?"

"I will address them in the Place de la Concorde, and I shall invite Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier to do likewise."

Major Beauharnais departed to do His Excellency's bidding. The preparations being made justified the feeling of alarm that fire was a dangerous plaything

for the coureurs-de-bois and their allies on such occasions amongst the soldiery and peasantry. Choppers had gone out to the forest and hewn away large pines and balsams, which in their gummy state, when well going, would furnish light and heat for too large an area of the town for either comfort or safety.

Frontenac sent for Colonel Dumont. "It will be necessary from what Beauharnais tells me of the preparations for this evening's celebration, that the garrison be ready to parade at short notice."

"It would be well, Your Excellency," replied Colonel Dumont, "and I have already given orders that the water-tank be filled in case of fire. Were it not that the danger of fire spreading would be greater from below, it would be well to have the bonfires in Lower Town."

"Yes, and the loss in that event would be heavy to the traders," said Frontenac.

"True, Your Excellency; but beaverskins can be replaced more easily than buildings."

"To-morrow," said Frontenac, "the troops from Montreal must embark. It will not do to keep the garrison there weakened for longer than necessity requires. The Iroquois will make a raid, I am convinced, before the leaves drop from the trees and the snow returns to mark the traces of their snowshoes. I shall not be content till I have heard that all is well at Montreal."

The sound of revelry and music ushered in the evening's festivities. Brandy, the sale of which was "strictly forbidden" but yet comparatively unchecked,

had fired the coureurs with a desire to excel themselves, and had filled the Indians with the fury of madness. Quarrels were frequent. The flames of bonfires in full career shot higher than the tallest tower, being built on higher ground and tier upon tier crosswise like a funeral pyre. The breeze off the river, blowing in puffs, fanned the fires and bore the sounds of shouting and riot towards the Château. From its windows Madame de Frontenac and her ladies-in-waiting viewed the wild but inspiring scene, while Frontenac himself, Major La Montagne, Major Beauharnais, Captain St. Just and others of subordinate rank, stood behind them explaining the meaning of various sights and sounds, and as occasion required it, allaying their alarm.

"To whom does the honor of the day belong? To Marcelle, of course," said Frontenac, in answer to his wife's question. "It was she who rescued the city from a mob and then turned the mob into soldiers. It was they, my dear, who ambushed and then drove the English off."

"Do you hear, Marcelle?" asked Madame de Frontenac, smiling. "His Excellency yields the palm to you."

"Not to me, Your Excellency, I implore; but mayhap, to the coureurs some part of the credit is owing," said Marcelle.

"A man stands without and demands to see Your Excellency," said a servant, crossing to where His Excellency stood, and speaking low.

"Who is he? Not a messenger, I hope."

"A coureur, Your Excellency."

Frontenac descended to the entrance, where the tall, dark form of an outlaw of the forest stood before the sentry, who barred his way.

"What would you, my man?" asked Frontenac, gently. "You are, I see, one of the coureurs to whom I owe so much."

"The coureurs wish to see Marcelle," said the man, respectfully, his cap in hand.

"What!" exclaimed Frontenac. "That is impossible, unless they come before the Château. The lady cannot trust herself in so furious a company. That I could not allow."

There was no response from the coureur. Then Frontenac, who by no means wished to offend allies so important both in the city and in the wilderness, noting the man's expectancy or embarrassment, spoke again.

"Will they not come here as they did before?"

"The coureurs would crown her Queen of the Coureurs if she will come to where they are gathered," replied the coureur.

"Are you Jean Dilbot?" asked Frontenac, suddenly, as he caught a clearer sight of the outlaw's features in the dim light of the candle overhead.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"And they wish it, do they?" remarked Frontenac, relenting.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Then it must be done. Nothing can well be denied to them to-day. Where do you wish her to go?"

"To the bonfire, Your Excellency."

"But we shall not know which of the many. Will you escort us, for I must go with her on such an occasion."

"My men will be overcome with the honor of a visit from Your Excellency. It will be more than we deserve. I will return to them again and bid them prepare for the arrival of their king."

"I forbid that, Dilbot," said Frontenac. "On this occasion I wish to surprise them at their rejoicings, and, in fact, in order that they may feel altogether free and in no way embarrassed by my coming, I shall now, that I think of it, go in disguise. You will, therefore, wait and conduct Marcelle, and in your hands I will place her, but I shall accompany her with others, merely as a companion, but not as an escort. She needs no escort with her own."

Without waiting for Dilbot's reply, Frontenac returned to the ladies and informed them of the wish of the coureurs that Marcelle should allow them to crown her their queen.

"A signal honor," said Madame de Frontenac, with a slight asperity.

"I envy you—but will you go?" exclaimed Marie Duclos, excitedly. She was a native-born, and spoke with the subdued earnestness of one to whom such incense meant more than it were possible to those of French birth beside her.

"Yes," replied Marcelle, proudly, her loveliness enhanced by the excitement of the moment.

"Are we to see it all?" cried Mathilde Florian, clasping her hands in expectancy.

"You will put on your coureur dress," said Frontenac to Marcelle.

"As Your Excellency commands."

"Then go to the tower door, where I will meet you. The others may come later, but not with us. It would offend the coureurs, I think, who have asked for you."

Marcelle did not long delay in donning the attire of the forest. Like the wild-flowers of the woods she was best suited in her natural setting. As Frontenac appeared disguised in a black wig, for which, however, he had a great aversion, and in the plainer garb of a Canadian gentleman, Marcelle laughed subduedly.

"You laugh, Marcelle," said he, as he turned the ruff at his neck so that the points should not disturb him; "but despite my three-score years and ten I feel equal to a bowl and a brawl as well as the gayest of my courtiers."

"I laughed not, Your Excellency, at the oddity of your dress," said Marcelle, apologetically, "but that you should fancy that the distinction of your bearing could be disguised in so mild a way from the keen-sighted and sharp-witted men of the forest."

"You flatter, I fear, Marcelle, but it is permitted you. An event like this does not occur so often that both you and I should not feel exultant."

His Excellency and Marcelle stepped forth into the entrance-hall. Beauharnais and others of the suite were already there in response to Frontenac's orders.

"I will hand you over to their leader, Marcelle," said Frontenac, "but we shall follow you at so short a distance that in case of need—which, however, I do

not fear—we shall be ready to fly to your assistance. Is that as you wish ?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

Frontenac then accompanied Marcelle to the street and placed her in the custody of Dilbot, who was overjoyed at His Excellency's condescension and favor.

In this order, with Marcelle and Jean Dilbot leading, and His Excellency with a few of his officers in the rear, the procession approached the scene of gaiety. The huge bonfire, but half-concealed by buildings and the contour of the cliff from those approaching, burst suddenly on their view.

"We remain here in the shadow," said Frontenac. "I do not wish to disturb them."

As the eyes of the expectant throng caught sight of Marcelle in her coureur dress, with Jean Dilbot emerging from the shadow of the walls into the glare of the fire, a mighty cheer burst from their throats that drowned the crackling of the burning wood and filled the breast of the forest maiden with excitement and pride. One after the other, coureurs broke from the crowd and ran cheering towards her, waving their caps and dancing wildly. As they drew near, however, they formed themselves into a guard of honor, which, at the word of their leader, became at once a model of order and propriety. This was the first step in the process of the coronation of Marcelle, who submitted to the requirements of her new dignity with pleasure and confidence. It was with a feeling of distinct relief, however, that Frontenac saw the

change in the demeanor of the coureurs, and when they escorted Marcelle higher up the terrace to an elevated point opposite the bonfire, well away from its extreme heat, yet within the radiance of its illumination, he watched the progressive steps of the coronation with an interest quite devoid of misgiving. The chair to which Marcelle was conducted was made from the antlered head of the giant moose, an animal of enormous size, already then disappearing from lower latitudes, and to be found in plenty only in the extreme north. From tip to tip the antlers measured not less than eight feet, and their huge palmations formed arms for the sitting-piece, large enough of themselves to have held Marcelle. The eyes, of amethyst, gleamed like balls of flame in the firelight. A dozen coureurs ranged themselves about this huge chair of coronation in the attitude of guardianship, except at the front, where a clear space was left that the approaching subjects might have free access when the time for submission should arrive.

Dilbot, who conducted the ceremony with the ease and dignity of one accustomed to command, gave the signal to retire, Marcelle being left alone save for her guard. The crowd of stragglers and loungers stood off in the distance, where they could still witness the strange proceeding without attracting the notice or attention of the coureurs, who would be only too quick to resent any interference from without.

The coureurs then returned, with Jean Dilbot at their head, bearing something of evident value with much care, which, as they approached, disclosed itself

to Marcelle as a gorgeous garment of highly ornamented buckskin, more splendid and beautiful than anything of the kind she had ever beheld. Behind the bearers of this beautiful robe of state and queenship walked a coureur carrying the well-known cap of that fraternity, light in weight, though thickly fringed and tasselled. As the procession drew up before Marcelle she arose to receive it. The bearers advanced under the direction of Dilbot and replaced her old coat with the new one. The cap-bearer then stepped forward and knelt before her. With an air of solemnity that had hitherto not characterized the proceedings, Dilbot took the cap in his hands, and amidst the most profound silence, save for the occasional roar of the flames or the snapping of the burning wood, addressed Marcelle as follows:

"It is long since the coureurs of the woods first crowned their chief. More than a hundred years have passed since then. But you have been good to us. It was you who saved me, their leader, when in peril. It was you who spoke the word and the coureurs obeyed. You are our saviour and our queen." (Loud cheers and a waving of caps greeted this eloquent and fitting allusion to Marcelle.) "In former days the great moose, who has disappeared from the haunts of the white man, was the proudest trophy of our chase. The chair which you occupy is the head of one left to us by the first of our kings or chiefs. It has been kept as a sacred treasure, and will continue to be held in safety and reverence till such time as the need of it shall again arise, and long may it be till then." (Further

cheers from the outlaws). "In those days, too, the kadiak, the great elk, and the ice-bear, roamed in the forests, but now are they, too, things of the past. All, all vanishes except the fidelity of the coureurs to each other. As headman of the coureurs, in the absence of our chief Lebrun, who has not been heard of since the Ottawas forded the Mackinac, I place this cap upon your head to crown you our Queen, to whom on our knees we now swear allegiance."

As the coureur chief spoke these concluding words he placed the cap upon Marcelle's head, the coureurs accompanying the action by kneeling upon the ground and uttering a short but peculiar form of prayer.

Arrayed in her new coat and cap of office, Marcelle looked the part to which she had been raised, the picturesque wildness of her attire and the splendor of her beauty adding to the strangeness and brilliance of the unusual scene. Silence fell upon the throng as she began to address them.

"I am proud, O men of the forest, of the honor and dignity to which you have raised me to-night," she said. "My father and my mother knew what it was to enjoy the freedom of the woods, of the waters and of the plain. My father, as you know, belongs to the order of the coureurs, and could he see me to-night in the person of your queen, and did he know of the brave part which you have taken in the defence of the country of the French King, he would be pleased more than it is in my feeble power to tell you. But there is one greater than any of us standing not far away who glories in your deeds, and if you will

permit me, I will ask your leader, the brave Jean Dilbot, to beseech him to address you, for you, as well as I, I am sure, owe no prouder allegiance than to His Excellency, sent to us by the great King."

This happy ending to Marcelles' remarks was greeted with loud demonstrations of approval, and almost before the cheering had subsided it was renewed with even greater fervor, as Dilbot emerged from the deep shadow of the wall accompanied by Frontenac, whose majestic air no disguise could hide, and by the officers of his escort.

As Frontenac approached Marcelle, she moved as if to make way for him, but with a wave of his hand he directed her to remain, and then turning towards the firelight and the coureurs, he spoke:

"I have not waited for a convenient time to acknowledge what the King, my master, and what I, his governor and viceroy, owe to you in this glorious defence of his dominions. You have received from me, through your brave leader, the token of my gratitude. It is fitting, too, that you should have chosen for your queen one so worthy of your choosing, both by right of birth and by right of beauty, for in all the land of old or new France there is none more beautiful than Marcelle. The statue of His Majesty the King stands, as you know, in the Place de la Concorde, and to complete your ceremony there could be nothing more suitable, both to the occasion of your rejoicing and to the honor of the King, than for you to carry that statue in procession, while you praise his name and glorify his greatness."

This suggestion of Frontenac was received with acclamation, and the coureurs, who regarded him as their especial friend in view of his leniency and spirit of justice in the interpretation of the laws, could not be restrained, but broke into tumult as they ran through the crowded streets in quest of the royal statue. The Place de la Concorde was straightway transformed from a place of peace into a place of discord. The shouting coureurs no sooner turned into the square than they ran towards the statue of the King with all the ardor of contestants in a race. Citizens who had neglected to make way were tumbled about like ninepins, the result being that individual quarrels sprang up in many places, and there was likely to ensue a riot of no small proportions when the commanding voice of Frontenac was heard directing the coureurs to form themselves into a guard for the reception and escort of the royal effigy. With Dilbot at their head, a number seized hold of the statue and placed it upon a platform which, resting upon bearing poles, afforded a carrying-place of reasonable security. At this moment the music of the garrison band was heard in the distance, and by the time of its arrival everything was in readiness for the moving forward of the coureurs, who had little idea that their elevation of the wooden statue of the King was serving the double purpose of declaring their loyalty to the head of the State and their disapproval of the omission of the Bishop to do proper honor to his civil superior.

Torches were provided of pine and spruce, which, raised on high in the hands of the coureurs and of

citizens who fell in behind them, gave to the demonstration the character of a general rejoicing on a large scale.

"His Excellency has well timed his rebuke of the Bishop, for by to-morrow the ship bearing the news of the siege will have sailed," remarked St. Just to La Montagne, as they stood in the rear of the vice-regal party, who viewed the march past with satisfaction.

"Yes, it will read well to His Majesty, who will note also the Bishop's absence; that is, if a list of those present is furnished with the other details," replied the latter.

"You think, then, it won't be," said St. Just.

"I do not think —"

"No, I have observed that," said St. Just, gleefully.

La Montagne looked at his companion with scorn.

"It ill befits you to assist at laying traps for —"

"A hundred pistoles for their regalement!" It was the voice of Frontenac speaking to Beauharnais. "They have deserved well of us. I shall report their demonstration to the King."

"What did I tell you?" exclaimed La Montagne, with exultation, yet in a whisper. "The Bishop has been duped."

With almost parental pride Frontenac escorted Marcelle back to the Château, accompanied by his officers. The triumph of himself and his household had been complete. He smiled with satisfaction as he reflected how it would be a lesson to Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier and teach him once more to respect the authority of the King, and not to attempt the

usurpation of a precedence which belonged to the King's representative and to no other. Frontenac, appeased by the success of his recent effort, both as military and civil governor, turned his attention once more to the accomplishment of his cherished desire, the marriage of Marcelle and Philippe Beauharnais.

"And now, Marcelle, there remains but one wish unfulfilled, one duty to Heaven and to you." Marcelle trembled as her protector spoke. "Philippe has distinguished himself in the service of his country. I have recommended him for the consideration of his King. But no decoration that he may receive, or favor, even from His Majesty, would be worth a moment's purchase in his eyes in comparison with the bestowal of your heart—nay, he has that already—your hand I should have said. The appointed time is drawing near, and although our preparations have been upset to some extent by the invasion of the English, they shall not on that account be suffered to lapse in the smallest detail. I shall give orders for the decoration of the Château on a scale equal to the occasion, and it will be for years to come the talk of New France, how Frontenac rewarded you with a husband of proven worth, and your husband with a wife of unequalled beauty and sweetness. Your silence is not the less grateful to me since it proceeds from a sense of duty nobly done. How pleased he looked at the adoration—for, indeed, one must call it so—of the coureurs-de-bois. His eyes were fixed upon you as upon some glory which enchained his senses, and even when I spoke to him he forgot the

duties of his office, so absorbed was he in love and admiration."

Frontenac paused and looked at Marcelle, as if he expected her to speak.

"It is Your Excellency's wish?" she said, enquiringly.

"My wish?" Frontenac exclaimed, in a tone of amazement, combined with some irritation. "It is my command, you might have said."

"Then I obey," said Marcelle, in a low voice.

"Well spoken, Marcelle," said Frontenac; "such a chance does not occur twice in the life of mortals."

When a maid brought the billet down to Her Excellency, as foreseen by Madame Béranger when that lady deposited it behind the curtain, Her Excellency laid it upon her work-table so that she might give it to Marcelle when she should come in. Madame Béranger had not supposed that Her Excellency would descend to opening any communication addressed to Marcelle, but she was well aware that it was the custom of young ladies resident in the Chateau to submit their relations with the sterner sex to Her Excellency's approval, or disapproval, as it sometimes turned out to be. A letter was a rare form of communication at that date. In cases of formality especial messengers were despatched, a custom still retained in royal correspondence. In cases of less importance or notoriety, communications were verbal and restricted, in compliance with the strict usages of the prevailing conventionality of the time. There were no secrets in those

days—at least it was so taken for granted. Whether our forefathers and foremothers were more suspicious or more careful, they did not permit that indifference to propriety and that freedom of manners which at the present day is hailed as a victory for womankind in the cause of feminine liberty. The note had been brought to Madame Frontenac in the natural course of events, and as required by domestic discipline. It would be impossible, therefore, as Madame Béranger and Sophie Benoit knew, for Marcelle to conceal the fact of its arrival. It would be necessary for her to let Madame Frontenac into the secret of its contents. The affair fell out as calculated by them. Marcelle entered, flushed with the exercise of walking on the terrace, where every day the young ladies of the household took an airing.

"A letter for you," said Madame de Frontenac, pointing to a small receptacle on her work-table, while continuing with her needle the work she had in hand.

"A letter for me?" exclaimed Marcelle, in amazement. "Who could have written? It isn't from papa or the Huron, for they cannot write. Has it the Bishop's seal?"

Madame de Frontenac made no reply, merely waiting for Marcelle to open and read for her information.

Marcelle was stricken with shame and indignation. The color came and went as she slowly spelt out the meaning of the words, for she, too, had but recently learned the accomplishment of reading.

"What is it, Marcelle?" enquired Her Excellency, who could not fail to note the excitement and consternation manifest in Marcelle's countenance.

"I do not know what it means, Your Excellency. It is addressed to me, and looks like a man's writing. I do not know what it means." As she ran her eyes over it again her color partially returned, and she soon regained her composure, but it was not a composure mingled with defiance. Her pride had been deeply wounded that any man should have attempted such a liberty.

"It speaks of what, Marcelle?" continued Madame de Frontenac, pitilessly.

"Will Your Excellency read it? It is difficult for me."

"I would rather that you read it aloud to me, Marcelle." The sound of her name seemed so strange that Marcelle started and would gladly have fled to her own room.

But Madame de Frontenac, now suspicious that all was not as it should be, asked for the letter and concealed it in her pocket.

"His Excellency and I will examine it for you and let you know what we think. It is enough."

When Frontenac had returned from a shooting expedition to his Château, a servant informed him that Madame would be pleased to see him when he had finished dressing.

"Well, my dear, what is it?" asked Frontenac as he entered into her apartments in his usual cheery way.

"I have something of importance," replied his wife.

"It is no less than a letter seeking an appointment by a former acquaintance of Marcelle."

"With Marcelle?" exclaimed Frontenac, in astonishment. "It is impossible!"

"Scarcely impossible," said his wife, with feminine incredulity. "Here is the letter."

Frontenac took the labored scrawl, and read and re-read it, and then laid it on the table.

"It purports to come from some friend of hers who knew her in the woods—a pal, we are expected to assume."

"How dreadful!" sighed Madame de Frontenac.

"It is dreadful, if true. But what says Marcelle?"

"She says she cannot understand it. No, she does not deny it. She avoids giving a straight answer."

"I will see what truth there is in this, and quickly enough," exclaimed Frontenac, who had made up his mind what to do with a suddenness characteristic of him. "Has Marcelle left the Château since receiving it?"

"No, my dear. Not since it was found."

"Found, and where?"

"Behind a curtain of the portière of my boudoir."

"A likely place to put a billet-doux," remarked Frontenac, bitterly.

"It was well hidden," observed his wife, who could not readily forego a sensation.

Frontenac took up the letter again and left the room abruptly.

"Where is Demoiselle Marcelle?" he enquired of the first servant who came across his path.

"In her bedroom, master."

"Then ask her to meet me in my office at once."

The servant hurried to Marcelle's apartments and informed her. Marcelle had been weeping. Her good name had for the first time in all her life been subjected to suspicion and scrutiny. Angry and depressed as she might feel, there was no good in either. She could leave the Château now, in all probability would have to leave it, but it would be under a cloud. She was prostrated by the base insinuation. All resentment, as all gaiety, was banished from her tear-stained face. She received His Excellency's command almost with indifference. She had expected it, but it was none the less terrible.

"Tell His Excellency, please, that I will go at once," said Marcelle.

Frontenac awaited Marcelle with some impatience. At last there was a timid knock.

"Come in, Marcelle," he cried, in a tone of unconscious severity peculiar to him when aroused.

Marcelle pushed the door open and entered.

"Why do you look so sorrowful, Marcelle?"

Frontenac was unfeignedly astonished. He had no suspicion of her, whatever others might have.

"Your Excellency—" began Marcelle, in a broken voice.

"You are not going to be faint-hearted over this, Marcelle," continued Frontenac, but with a tenderness in his tone that Marcelle had never heard before. "We will presently discover the villain, and then—"

"Oh, Your Excellency!" exclaimed Marcelle, in agonized relief, and sinking unbidden but from very weakness into a chair.

Frontenac rang.

"A glass of wine," said Frontenac, as the servant appeared. "I believe you innocent of all possible wrong-doing," he continued, turning in his chair and facing the distracted girl. "But we must entrap the writer of this infamous epistle, and you must lend me your help."

"What can I do, Your Excellency?"

"We will concoct an answer."

"As Your Excellency directs. I will be glad to prove to Your Excellency that I am not immodest, but I can scarcely hope—"

"Enough, Marcelle. At present you are in no frame of mind to engage in setting traps. Later on I will do what is necessary. In the meantime, just as if nothing had happened, we must not allow the base trickery of some jealous woman—for I am sure it is that and nothing more—to interfere with our happiness. I will, of course, tell Beauharnais all about it, but then he is too hot-headed to be trusted in this affair, which must be left to me. He would be sure to make a scene and spoil all."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE recent success of the Canadian arms, due to the promptness of Frontenac and his capacity for command as much as to the valor and patriotism of the Canadians themselves and their French auxiliaries, had given him a reputation throughout New France and New England such as no other Frenchman had hitherto enjoyed. Nor was he slow to take advantage of it, being well aware that the popular mind must be kept occupied or it will wander and lose itself in other affairs of entertainment or of business, and being out of hand will continue so, like a colt that, having once felt the sweets of freedom, seeks them again despite rein, whip and spur. To conquer thus in the mind of the King and in the eye of the multitude at what might be called, with peculiar appropriateness, one blow, was as gratifying as opportune.

The rebuke of the Bishop was intended more for the notice of the King than for that of the people, although their participation and interest in it was such as to impress them with the power and predominance of the viceroy. The ebb and flow of public opinion would, however, in due course, Frontenac well knew, especially in view of the importance of his spiritual office and position, place Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier in his old position in popular estima-

tion again, if the attention of the people were not held in leash by further entertainment. Accordingly, the day was finally set for the wedding of Marcelle and Philippe Beauharnais, and gowns that had been in process of manufacture in Quebec, or had been imported from Paris, were now brought forth and inspected for the last time in preparation for the coming event. Carpenters were employed who built a new balcony overhanging the descending cliff, an extension of the one already existing, upon which the whole of that portion of Quebec society to be admitted to the wedding-feast could sit and be served, if the weather were fine, in full view of the St. Lawrence and its high banks, which, clothed in the green of forest and meadowland, presented to the eye a scene of equal extent and beauty. Wherever the scaffolding and framework of the balcony seemed likely to shock the eye by the rudeness or skeleton character of its framework—necessarily more temporary than permanent, both in appearance and structure—hanging baskets of flowers and of ferns of immense proportions were introduced, and the side of the cliff, at best bare and unadorned, became a terrace for the nonce blooming with flowers embedded in verdure.

The extension of the balcony was also part of the plan for seating the audience at the play, for, as we have seen, it was Frontenac's design to give the play upon the evening of the wedding-day. Little was said regarding this intention, however, since the play was to take place as an impromptu amusement, and one, as it were, suddenly thought of for the entertainment of

the guests, who should be the more delighted with it for its unexpectedness, a pleasant fiction much in vogue in the time of the great Louis. Preparation for it was steadily going on. The general plan or skeleton of the plot showed Marcelle as the heroine rescued by a friendly Indian at an opportune moment, when the French soldiers of an expedition sent for her relief had been led away upon a false scent. A priest occupied a respectable position in the foreground, which would soften the asperities of the moment and quiet the fears of those who might be afraid of the subsequent anathemas of Saint-Vallier. The play would show Marcelle at her best, and be a fitting conclusion to her marriage-day. That it would please Frontenac for another reason we have already seen. Then, again, it had become a part of Frontenac's settled policy to win the coureurs-de-bois. Whether it was due to the mixture of Indian blood in the veins of many members of that strange body of men, or otherwise, it enjoyed an immunity from Indian bloodthirstiness that left its members frequently unharmed in the midst of the most savage outbursts of Iroquois or Algonquin. It has been alleged that the terror of their name left the coureurs free to come and go where others durst not venture. So potent or so fortunate a body of lithe, active and courageous men, having a natural feeling of affection also for the cause of France, would become in time the police or standing army of New France, and, if early won to the side of the Governor, must in course of time develop into a bulwark of vice-royalty.

Frontenac had given instructions, therefore, that the queen of the coureurs-de-bois should be escorted from the cathedral by a body guard of members of that body, and likewise that at the supreme moment or climax of the play their intervention should set matters right and restore Marcelle to her friends. If to this the Bishop should object, it would unquestionably be interpreted as an exhibition on his part of unfriendliness to the coureurs.

The addition of the balcony, as extended to the drawing-room, gave a large and commodious seating-space for the audience and for Frontenac, who intended to be present in state. Scenes typical of the country and of the conditions of the day were painted for the decoration of the stage, but where possible or necessary the natural was substituted for the artificial. The realistic character of the scenery and of the acting, for which ample scope had been allowed, would have the effect both of increasing the interest and of lessening the objection to it. If Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier decided to condemn the play, and should ban those who attended it, he would find that every provision had been made to anticipate his action. Robes and antlers were brought from the magazines of Lower Town, together with canoes and the equipment of camps, even to the smallest detail, that nothing might be wanting to render the scene correct.

To La Montagne and St. Just fell the work both of superintending and construction, and while upon them would surely rest the blame if any part of the setting

of the play should go wrong or be misapplied, they were but half convinced that their rewards would compensate them for the worry and trouble. Neither were they always at one, and since they were sometimes of diverse minds in matters both of art and of etiquette, Frontenac himself was sometimes called upon to decide, which he customarily did with promptness and satisfaction.

"Madame Gigot is not coming. I heard of it to-day." St. Just had been contemplating the placing in proper position of a part of the scenery which, despite numerous suggestions and much worry, refused either to fit in its place or to harmonize with its surroundings. His mind, wandering from the failure of his own efforts, reverted to the disappointments of others.

"It is impossible! She would not miss it for the world," said La Montagne, who had in mind Madame Gigot's pretty daughter.

"No; she has heard of the play, and is ill," said St. Just.

"Then you think that fear of the Bishop has made her ill. It will not excuse her. His Excellency is in no mood for pretended illnesses."

"And then there is Dimot, the magazinier, and Avenant—"

"Let them stay away; it is a matter of indifference," cried La Montagne, wrathfully.

"But the audience? It will be a severe blow to His Excellency if nothing comes of it after all our work. And then the Bishop—"

"Never mind. Go on. I cannot wait for evermore over pasteboard trees and painted pools of water." La Montagne was growing impatient.

"Might I ask Monsieur le Majeur," began St. Just, with mock seriousness, "how you propose to dispose of the Bishop when he visits the Château afterwards?"

"At the déjeuner?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. He will not come. You are foolish to ask such questions, St. Just. You know His Excellency would not ask him and then affront him with preparations for a play."

"But if he chooses to come?" suggested St. Just.

"Madman!"

"No, no; I am no madman. He may come. He may have been informed of what is to take place, and may threaten the guests with the pangs of purgatory. That would be disastrous."

"Pardieu! It would," said La Montagne, reflectively. "The triumph of His Excellency would be short-lived. Still we cannot help it."

"But you will see that Father Delaurier will arrange it all," suggested St. Just.

"Perhaps so. At any rate, a ban means penance, and we need no penance after all this work," said La Montagne.

"That is true. Let us leave these worries of state and religion to those who are paid for it."

"Have you engaged the Montagnais for the capture of Marcelle?" asked La Montagne.

"Yes, he understands. Tobigo is a fine-looking man, and then it doesn't take any training."

"But you cannot rely on these fellows."

"No. But I threatened him with worse than hell-fire if he did not do his duty."

"Your indignation, I suppose."

"Precisely."

"Then he is certain to be there," said La Montagne, sarcastically.

The playful bickering of the two officers was cut short by the entry of Frontenac, whose vigilance was proverbial and extended at all times to the minutest details of his affairs.

"The arrangements do you credit," said Frontenac, as with a sweep of his eye he glanced at the probable setting of the drama. "It will be necessary to hide the stage from the public till the afternoon, when the guests have departed. They will return in the evening, and during their absence the stage may be unveiled."

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Major La Montagne, with half a sigh. "I will leave that, with Your Excellency's permission, to Captain St. Just."

"It could not be in better hands," said Frontenac, approvingly, but the compliment, great as it was, had not the effect of subduing the fires of wrath kindled in the breast of the chosen officer.

"Would Your Excellency suggest the material by which it should be covered?" asked Major La Montagne.

"With tapestries, if possible."

"But we have so few."

"Then borrow. I leave that to you." So saying, Frontenac departed.

"Then borrow! Then borrow!" shouted St. Just, with glee. "Yes, I will cover it up when you have done the borrowing, and I will have no nonsense about it. Be quick, Major."

"I direct you to consult Monsieur l'Intendent at once with respect to the covering suggested by His Excellency," said La Montagne, firmly.

"But I shan't do it!" cried St. Just, angrily.

"Then I shall order you to the guard-room as a common offender."

"I dare you to do it!" cried St. Just, beside himself with rage. "I shall appeal to His Excellency and have you dismissed from the service—"

"Shame! gentlemen," said a soft, sweet voice, at the sound of which both turned. It was Sophie Benoit, whose pretty face had long since fired the heart on more than one occasion of each of the men addressed.

"I appeal to you," exclaimed St. Just, eager to get the first word.

"I am first; I declare it by right of rank," retorted La Montagne.

"Then you do not wish me to decide?" said Sophie, laughing.

"Yes, we agree."

"Then both should do what neither wishes to do," she began.

"But I do not decline," interposed La Montagne, catching the drift of the judgment.

"Then why demur? Go!" Whereupon Sophie laughed immoderately at her own wit. St. Just, too, joined in out of malice. La Montagne looked offended at the preferment of his subordinate; but Sophie speedily came to the rescue.

"If you will be so good, Major La Montagne, you are to take me into the déjeuner. Do you refuse?"

"Never!" exclaimed La Montagne, dramatically. "I am your loveliness's slave."

"Cease bowing, then, and be off," said Sophie, blushing pleasedly.

One glance at St. Just, and La Montagne betook himself to his errand. St. Just's disappointment was worth the trouble and the care of all that day.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE wedding-day dawned with the promise of fine weather, and as the warm sun flooded the city with the light of a summer morning, the populace poured forth into the streets, eager to satisfy their eyes with a sight of the splendors of the occasion and their appetites with the good things provided for them by His Excellency. Flags floated from every tower, while the dwellings of even the humblest gave evidence of the desire of those within to rejoice with the joyful, and to testify their admiration for the bride and groom. Frontenac, too, shared in this endeavor of the people to show their affection for Marcelle and Philippe Beauharnais. His recent success had magnified his talents in their eyes, and his condescension on the occasion of the bonfire had greatly increased his popularity. Indians from without the walls and from the villages adjacent stalked into the city with the half-demure, half-lordly air of freemen of the wilderness, the gorgeousness of their attire of fringed buckskin and trailing head-feathers contrasting oddly with the humbler garments of the squaws. Voyageurs stopped on their way to the upper country to enjoy the celebration and to contribute with their reckless joviality to the general exhilaration. Habitants from the seignories came as in duty bound, but none the

less glad to lay aside the cares of husbandry and the task imposed upon them by the Governor of watching the river front for their own and the general weal. With a trustfulness that almost exceeded the limits of wisdom, the Iroquois were for once left unthought of, as if even they could not so far forget themselves as to mar the pleasure of the day. Despite the excitement of the people and the number of the visitors, there was little disorder save in the purlieus of Lower Town, where the brandy shops did a thriving trade; but even here quarrels were soon over and good feeling as often renewed.

At nine o'clock His Excellency's carriage, for the conveyance of himself, Her Excellency and the prospective bride, drew up before the Château, accompanied by two vehicles of lesser pretentions, intended for the ladies of the household assisting in the ceremony of the wedding. A body of horsemen, at whose head rode Colonel Dumont, furnished the *garde d'honneur*, and in shining helmet and breastplate added much to the appearance of the entourage. The groom, accompanied by La Montagne and St. Just in the uniforms of the same corps, had already ridden to the cathedral, and awaited the coming of the bride. The approaches to the sacred edifice were guarded by coureurs-de-bois, who kept the line on either side that those arriving might have freedom of access. Marcelle, though pale, was supremely beautiful, and as she descended from the carriage and, upon the arm of His Excellency, entered the cathedral, the spectators followed her with looks of the most ardent admira-

tion. Half-suppressed exclamations of wonderment greeted her as she passed, and even the venerable and distinguished Governor himself for the moment took an inferior place in public consideration. To those who by birth or fortune were entitled to and had received cards of invitation to the ceremony and to participate in the subsequent festivities, the appearance of the bride was not more productive of interest and concern than the meeting of Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier and his perpetual rival in colonial affairs. Frontenac maintained his composure with an assumption of haughty ease, indicating, at least to some degree, a consciousness of the circumstance. The Bishop, on the other hand, looked the embodiment of religious seriousness. His pale face and unmoved expression of countenance betrayed not the slightest unbending for the occasion, while his appearance in the company of his attending priests impressed the people deeply with a sense of his exalted position and power. As Frontenac for a moment confronted him in giving the bride away, the stillness was undisturbed, but a sigh or two of relief was plainly audible as that part of the ceremony passed off without incident.

The pealing bells forewarned the people without of the happy conclusion of the marriage ceremony, and the appearance of Philippe and Marcelle Beauharnais at the cathedral door was greeted with shouts and other manifestations of gladness. Whatever lack there might have been in popular interest in the arrival of His Excellency was amply atoned for upon his re-appearance. The bridal procession re-formed

and departed amidst tumultuous demonstrations of the people's good-will. To the coureurs-de-bois was accorded the honor of escorting the bride and groom to the Château.

"The day has done honor to itself in the splendor and heartiness of your reception, Madame Beauharnais," said Frontenac, with mingled gallantry and playfulness, as with his wife he stood upon the steps of the Château to receive the bride and groom.

Marcelle blushed anew with pride and pleasure.

"To Your Excellency is due whatever of happiness I enjoy—" began Marcelle, respectfully.

"Chut! madame. Happiness is not so easily purchased. It lies in the heart, and not in the ear that hears or the eye that sees," said Frontenac. "But I will not deliver a homily upon matrimony—you need not fear. To you, Colonel Dumont, and your officers my thanks are due, as likewise to my gallant coureurs, who have shown that they are at home alike in the woods or in the city, and that the freedom of the wilds is not incompatible with the restraints of civilization. Would that it might always be so."

The more serious matter of the general reception putting a stop to further parley at the entrance of the Château, the bridal party continued on into the grand drawing-room and took their station there.

"What think you of the efforts of Major La Montagne and Captain St. Just, Marcelle? Have they not done well to transform this hideous blazonry into a scene at once so pleasing and so natural?"

St. Just and La Montagne looked at each other

with an expression of dismay. His Excellency was unconsciously naming them as the abettors in his contemplated crime. They became nervous and fearful.

"It reveals their good taste not less than their kind hearts," replied Marcelle, pleasantly.

"And yet they seem not too well-pleased that we should invade their modesty with our recognition. Believe me, gentlemen, it is not unbecoming two modest gentlemen that they should receive the reward of merit."

With a heroic effort La Montagne smiled, and St. Just straightway followed suit.

"But here is Madame Béranger. This doubtless recalls your own wedding-day, Madame Béranger?"

Madame Béranger had married a discharged soldier, who by dint of thieving and contraband trade had amassed a competence. This was well known to Frontenac, but all was gold to him that glittered, for that day. His gay demeanor and amiable pleasantry furnished the theme of general conversation.

Madame Béranger, though for the moment visibly disturbed by the notice of His Excellency, was by no means put out of countenance by it.

"Yes, Your Excellency. I was just saying to my daughter Élise that Madame Beauharnais was so like what I was on my wedding-day.

"I am sure," affirmed Frontenac, "and monsieur was like the young seigneur?"

"I will not say he was quite so handsome, Your Excellency."

"But equally refined?" suggested Frontenac.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"It is that way," said Frontenac, solemnly, "that history repeats itself."

A short distance away, and waiting for the notice of His Excellency, stood Monsieur and Madame Levesconté, and their daughters, Delphine, Marianne and Judithe. As was to be expected upon the occasion of the actual marriage of Philippe Beauharnais, Marianne was sad and pale. She looked sufficiently charming, however, to attract the attention of Major La Montagne, who contrived to spend much of his time in her society and to distract her thoughts from her disappointment. In comparison with Delphine, too, Marie Schmidt was commonplace. Narcisse Bellefeuille was devoted to Delphine, who smiled continually with satisfaction.

The dignitaries of the Sovereign Council, judges, and other prominent officials, arrived for the *déjeuner*. Their wives were arrayed in the amplitude of the full skirt allowed by the fashion of the time, and what they lacked in beauty they made up in dress. Sophie Benoit attached herself to Madame Bernard-Pallu, to whom Jean Dilbot paid particular attention, since her son Follard was a coureur-de-bois—but, if rumor were true, he was no ornament to the fraternity. The hum of conversation and the gradual awakening of everybody from the solemnity of the religious ceremony to the gaiety of the subsequent festival quite transformed the assembly. The laughter of Delphine Levesconté was, perhaps, exces-

sive, since it interrupted those still extending congratulations to the bridal pair, and even the remarks of His Excellency, who, however, bore with becoming self-sacrifice whatever silliness the giddy and thoughtless might inflict upon him.

"His Excellency is really very much pleased with the arrangements, Sophie Benoit says," remarked St. Just to La Montagne, as they drew together for a moment's respite and conversation.

"Yes, and Marcelle is, too. Did you think them not in earnest? but there is the Intendant! His Excellency has been waiting for him, that I know. He did not appear at the church, but then that was a snub to the Bishop. If he had not appeared here His Excellency would have had his head by nightfall."

The Intendant, Monsieur de Champigny, was more distinguished in his appearance than his actions or his office would warrant one in supposing. The narrow spirit of carping in his letters and in the administration of his office as financial agent of the King was not present in his countenance, which had something of the lofty look of Frontenac himself, although it fell far short in the quality of greatness, which neither time nor the disgrace of supersession could remove from the face of him who feared neither Louis nor the Iroquois. Upon the arm of Monsieur de Champigny walked, with an air of equal dignity, his wife, one of the most beautiful women of New France. Everywhere the kindness of her acts and the generosity of her temperament had made her name a household word. Frontenac greeted her with the

warmth of manner affected by him when desirous of showing especial favor. It was such well-timed and discreet acts upon his part as these that riveted to him the friendship of the good and gentle and won the faithfulness of those less amenable to the courtesies and kindness of civilized life. Being a man of a both positive and negative temperament, he had strong friends as well as resolute foes, and if he exemplified the negative side of his nature by a certain aloofness in the presence of the undesirable members of the colony, he no less warmly greeted those whom he admired; for it was never his inclination to be all things to all men that by hypocrisy he might attain that which his uprightness prompted him to conquer. The Iroquois, like others of the red race, were quick to read the character of their white friends and enemies. Frontenac's disposition to substitute frankness for the wiles of the uncandid procured him that degree of respect and influence which they accorded to no other agent of either England or France.

The assemblage was now complete, but for the absence of one not less notable than His Excellency. "Would the Bishop come?" was the question upon every lip but Frontenac's. Had Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier been as wise as he was good he would have attended, but it was not in his heart to countenance the conduct of a governor whose every act had been in defiance of his own. Yet the programme of the play could scarcely have been carried out in the presence of the man whom it was chiefly

calculated to offend, for, whatever were the faults of Frontenac, rudeness could not be justly numbered amongst them. The Bishop did not come, and the sending of a substitute who possessed neither the credentials of his position nor the pliability of one likely to overlook the seriousness of the offence was not the less likely to arouse in Frontenac an anger which he disguised only because he was able to gratify it.

Notwithstanding the general attractiveness of the dresses of the ladies and the importance of other circumstances at which we have already hinted, Philippe and Marcelle Beauharnais occupied, with the venerable count, the largest share of public attention. The evident intention of the Bishop to absent himself reconciled the assemblage to his absence, and this, with the returning vivacity of Marcelle, gave renewed color and animation to the scene.

The success of the preliminaries, as La Montagne and St. Just considered the wedding, the reception, the *déjeuner*, and, indeed, all prior and leading up to the entertainment of the evening, was such as to inspire confidence in the remainder. The banquet-hall, imposing more from its length than from the beauty of its proportions, had been transformed into a picturesque and inviting dining-room, in which had been made ready, with the greatest formality and care, a *déjeuner* such as had never before graced the table of a colonial governor. Frontenac was desirous of rendering the occasion memorable. To the health of himself and his bride the heir of Beauharnais

replied with becoming diffidence. The Count de Beauharnais forgot the feebleness of his frame and the number of his years in the general enthusiasm and delight. Even the calculating Intendant, remembering, perhaps, the courtesy of Frontenac to his wife, spoke with a directness and fervor surprising to all who heard him. By Frontenac, however, be it said, the exaggeration of his language was viewed with both suspicion and contempt, for it was no passport to his regard that one should unduly abuse his enemies any more than that they should unjustly accuse himself or his friends. But this feeling of derision Frontenac took care to conceal, and the pleasure of the festival increased as the moments flew by. To the proposal of his own health he replied with composure, and concluded his reply with a glowing allusion to Marcelle and a request that all would return for the dancing and diversions of the evening. To this renewal of an already accepted invitation the reply was prompt and effusive.

"My heart is in my throat," complained St. Just to his brother in arms.

"Yes, and you had better swallow it. We shall be under an interdict by to-morrow. God alone can save us."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

It did indeed seem as if the weather, which had been lately none of the best, had suddenly resolved to vie with the bride in her own loveliness and to pay court in kind to one so justly famous for her beauty. The moon hung like "a lamp in Heaven," while underneath, the river danced in the silver light, dazzling the eye with brilliancy. Warm with the lingering heat of a summer day, yet harboring not a sting of dampness or of night for the unwary, the air, laden with music and the fragrance of flowers, partook of the universal charm, soothing the senses into a dream of love or of that sweet ecstasy which, in the mind of man or woman, usurps the reason when the emotions replace the judgment and lead us heavenward before our time.

To Frontenac it was a moment of triumph—though, to so great a man, not unduly so—when the guests arrived, not in two or threes seeking their friends in fear and trembling as if already the wrath of the mighty overhung them like a cloud, but in numbers puzzling to the eye, and all alike animated with the spirit of the occasion and by a desire for unrestrained enjoyment. Women rivalled each other in the splendor of their dress, which, to a surprising degree, shone with jewels and the then fashionable display of

gold. It had been the custom to suppose that everything of value in exchange was taken to Paris, there to be converted into necessaries for the Canadian people, who experienced, as a rule, less of luxury than of labor. But the startling brilliance of the ornaments worn by the ladies on this occasion showed to what an extent the colony had improved, and testified its recent progress in the arts and devices of polite society. That vanity was still the chief of human sins there was ample evidence, and had the good Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier been able, or pleased, to take a peep into the Château St. Louis on that memorable evening, it is quite probable that few of those offending would have been at ease, in either body or mind, for many days to come. But heaven so willed it that the people seemed to have forgotten their religious obligations—at least, with regard to their dress aud fondness for frivolity. As Frontenac, white with the paleness of age, looked for a moment upon the happy throng, and thought of France, of his own youth, and of the gaiety he had denied himself, he smiled at their present happiness, while he wondered at the spirit of ambition within himself which had driven him so far afield in search of fame.

The stage occupied one end of the long drawing-room. The proscenium was made up of curtains of oriental silk joined together to form one large piece. On either side tapestries of considerable size and beauty had been placed so as to deceive the eye with the illusion of vastness in the size of the stage itself, cutting off the corners of the room and making the end wall

appear of ample length. The scenery, which had been painted with care and skill, represented the forest with vistas of water, upon which were Indians in their birch-barks, or the cabin of the settler, nestling by the river-bank, where tall elms shaded it in summer and in winter presumably would shelter it from the sweeping wind. There were glimpses of rivulets purling through the depths of woods, whose trees overhung the little stream as if listening to its music or hearkening for news of the Iroquois, or of some message from afar. The city, too, was not forgotten. The towers and massive buildings of the fort and Château suggested the contrast to the life of plain and forest, while hidden away in one corner rose the spire of a church, as if, however, only the extreme requirements of the picture had prompted the artist to introduce it. As the curtain rose the orchestra poured forth a volume of sweet sounds, and as the melody ceased two scouts appeared upon the scene, coming together, by happy coincidence, from different directions, but with similar tales to tell. They spoke of the colony's unrest, of the powerlessness of the King, of the devastation wrought by the red men, and of the unchecked violation of monopoly. It was a picture of New France at the time of Frontenac's return, and the audience presently wondered if Frontenac himself would appear at the *dénouement*. The scouts having exchanged views with regard to what they had seen, a third arrived with further tidings of rumors of the advance of the Iroquois and of their threats to take New France from

the great King and drive the remaining Hurons and the Algonquins into the uttermost parts of the earth. While the opening of the play was thus being conducted with much skill and success, quite a different affair was being enacted on the side by Captain St. Just and Major La Montagne. St. Just was so much taken up with the details of the opening and had been so much in demand by both performers and audience that he had found it impossible to preserve a reasonable degree of coolness amid the haste and turmoil of his multifarious duties. What was his indignation and alarm, therefore, when La Montagne, ever on the watch for his friend's shortcomings, expressed the opinion that the Montagnais had not put in an appearance, as promised, and that, as a consequence, the rescue of Marcelle would have to be accomplished by some of those already taking part!

"I will see to that," said St. Just, in a tone of defiance, as he detected the triumphant sneer of his senior officer. "It shall not be said that what St. Just undertook he was not able to carry out, even without the help which he had a right to expect."

La Montagne eyed his friend with some amusement as St. Just turned on his heel and disappeared behind a wing of the scenery.

There were Indians in plenty always in Quebec, looking for gifts for trade, or for employment as guides and runners. It would require but one moment to choose one of fine figure and commanding mien, and but another to renew, perhaps, some of his attire, and, if necessary, to supplement his head-feathers.

A war-whoop of the Iroquois, such as only an Indian could give, following upon the rescue of Marcelle and her disappearance behind the scenes, and the task of the red man would be done. A pound of tobacco would secure the best amongst the Montagnais or Hurons for the part. The latter, since their conquest and dispersion by the Iroquois, had come to live near Quebec in considerable numbers, under the protection of the French, and being from the upper country, near the lake of their name, they were in general request by those who took the trail or water route in that direction in affairs of trade or state. St. Just rightly expected to find members of the Huron tribe within easy reach of the Château, and as one might say, already primed for their part in a Huron-Iroquois play. Not twenty steps towards Lower Town, from the terrace-wall, he met a tall and dignified specimen of the red race moving stealthily, as is their wont, but withal, contentedly and without suspicion. St. Just first addressed him in Montagnais, but the reply being in Huron, he at once entered into negotiations in that tongue. A pound of tobacco, as St. Just had suspected, overcame the Huron's bashfulness or dislike of an undertaking of which he knew absolutely nothing. As he advanced with the Huron within the radiance of the lights of the Château, St. Just was so much impressed with the appearance of the man, and with the success of his capture, that he drew from his girdle a knife of finest steel, and gave it without further bargaining to the object of his search.

"Look there, La Montagne; what think you now

of my promise? This Huron is much better than any Montagnais, and I mistake me much if he will not delight His Excellency."

La Montagne, who was in truth much relieved at St. Just's success, confessed his admiration for the Huron, and set to work to school him in his part, which, to his great delight, became an easy task when he found that he understood the French tongue as spoken by the coureurs-de-bois and voyageurs. After the scouts, whom we introduced to the reader at the opening of the play, had delivered themselves of their opinions of the state of the country, a messenger arrived upon the scene with the intelligence of an attack upon the fort at Chambly, and of the capture by the Iroquois of a beautiful French girl, who had been on a visit to the wife of the commandant of that fort. So important was the announcement considered by the colonel of the regiment in garrison, that he straightway reported it to a still higher authority, who directed that the most speedy and effective measures should be taken for the recapture of the girl and the punishment of the enemies of France. This order on being read, although the author of it did not appear, was received with excessive applause, since it could have emanated from no one but Frontenac himself, whose energetic and decided diction fitted so well the circumstance of the play and the temper of the audience. Thereupon soldiers from the garrison pass before the footlights in quick review, and the excitement of the audience rises to a high pitch as the troops, under Major Beauharnais, depart in pur-

suit of the Iroquois. The scene then changes. Deep in the heart of a lonely wood appears Marcelle, who by a strange miracle having escaped from her captors for a brief space, calls in her distress upon the heavenly powers to intervene in her behalf. Against the dark green of the forest background the pale and trembling heroine stands, and as she addresses the unseen spirits, beseeching them to save her from captivity, a tall form emerges from the darkness and—

"The Huron!" cried Marcelle, with a shriek of agony, and then fell fainting upon the ground. With a bound the Huron rescuer had seized Marcelle in his embrace, and passing through the side scenes had reached the exit and the street before those at hand had awakened to the fact that Marcelle had been carried off much beyond the requirements of the play. The audience was still testifying its delight with the splendor and success of the presentation by repeated applause and calls for Marcelle, when St. Just, in a frenzy of excitement, rushed back upon the stage and cried that Marcelle had been carried away in reality.

The silence of surprise fell like the hush of death upon the people. Then Frontenac arose and hurried behind the scenes. Instantly all was confusion and alarm. Orders were given, and a general pursuit was begun in all directions, some running one way, others another, but none knowing whither to proceed; yet all in hot and angry haste. The bell of the fort rang with a fierce energy, to be succeeded in another moment by the booming of the alarm gun to rouse the inhabitants that they might render aid to Marcelle,

who as yet no one dreamed to be other than the victim of an Indian's guile.

Despite, however, a thorough search in every quarter, there was no sign of Marcelle or her Huron captor. Soldiers and citizens had fled into the forest at the first alarm. Others, seizing canoes, had launched them upon the river, and had paddled hither and thither with all speed; but the moon declined, and daylight appeared, yet there were no tidings of the missing one.

While the citizens were still prosecuting at random a fruitless search, Frontenac called his officers together and gave directions for an organized pursuit.

"It is impossible," said he, "that the scoundrel shall get clear away. I empower you to offer rewards for Marcelle's rescue. Make them what you think necessary, but let there be no delay."

At first he had been stricken with grief and consternation, but these had been followed by feelings of anger and disappointment. Being a Huron, the Indian would not injure Marcelle, who in time might find means of returning to the city. But the sense of terror and alarm for her safety having been thus allayed, the upsetting of his plans and the absurdity of the position in which he was placed combined to cause Frontenac acute annoyance and chagrin. The outcome of the play, unless Marcelle were speedily rescued, would be attributed by his enemies to the wrath of God. Hence the triumph of the Bishop would, even without his seeking, be complete. For Beauharnais in his distress he entertained a feeling of sympathy not unmixed with shame. He had been

the author of the compact, and it was due to his influence that the wedding had been carried out. Upon him, therefore, rested a large measure of the odium. As Frontenac thought deeply over these things, and pictured to himself the sweet face of Marcelle, languishing in captivity, turning ever and anon towards Quebec a look of longing and regret—the grief of Beauharnais—the futility of the search, and the triumph of the Bishop, he determined that, cost what it might, they should not be, and it was with this end in view that he had called his officers about him.

"What think you, Colonel Dumont? As commandant of my garrison, I beg you to give your opinion as to what had best be done in this misfortune."

"I should consult, Your Excellency, those best acquainted with the cunning of the Indian, and most accustomed to his ways, the coureurs-de-bois," replied the commandant, promptly.

"Well said, Dumont! And you, Captain St. Just, I beg, will see to it that Lebrun or Dilbot, or, indeed, any of the coureurs-de-bois who may be met with, shall attend upon us at once for consultation and to receive our instructions."

St. Just arose to carry out His Excellency's command, but noticing the expression of that officer's face, Frontenac called him back and questioned him.

"Captain St. Just, before you go give me your opinion of what is best and soonest to be done, for by the look of your eye you seem to have an idea, or, at least, something to communicate."

Anxious to give an opinion which he knew to be the correct one, and thus in a measure to redeem himself from the fault of which he had unwittingly been guilty, and which also might in time be otherwise discovered, and cause his disgrace and banishment, St. Just turned to His Excellency and said:

"If I may, Your Excellency, without presumption, give my opinion—"

"You may. I command it," interrupted Frontenac.

"Then, Your Excellency has often heard Madame Beauharnais speak of a Huron Indian who lived with her father in—"

"Hold!" cried Frontenac, in dismay, as the truth began to dawn upon him. "Was this he?"

"I know not for certain, Your Excellency, but when she saw him entering from the side scenes to her rescue, she gave a scream and cried, 'The Huron!'"

"And that, then, was not part of the play?"

"No, Your Excellency."

Frontenac paused, while a dark frown thickened into a scowl of ominous meaning and intensity over his flashing eyes.

"Have I, then, been deceived and defied?" he asked hoarsely, but no one ventured to enlighten him.

"I have often heard her speak of the Huron," he continued, slowly, as if speaking to himself. "She has told us tales of his prowess and daring—but that was long ago. Of late she has said nothing—nay, not one word of him. I thought that she—truly, I myself had forgotten his existence. The perfidy of women! Marcelle!" But for a moment words seemed

to fail him, then, with a returning flush of rage, he exclaimed: "I have indeed been deceived and defied, but it has been in vain. Dead or alive she must return. Her honor, the honor of Beauharnais, the honor of myself, the credit of the King, have been cast upon the ground. I ought to have known. What will a women not do for love? All else is nothing to her." As Frontenac spoke the energy of youth animated his frame. His long white hair, thrown far back, as was his habit when agitated; his penetrating eyes, gleaming with indignation; his voice, trembling with disappointment and emotion, made him the picture of what in reality he was—the Governor of New France and all that it contained in the King's name.

Recovering from the extremity of his agitation, and calming himself by force of will as he returned to the consciousness of what had happened and what was best to follow it up with, he smiled, and turning to Colonel Dumont, spoke gently, but with a tinge of sarcasm.

"Could this not have been better done, Dumont?"

"I know not, Your Excellency," Dumont replied with concern. "Perhaps Major La Montagne or Captain St. Just can explain."

"Captain St. Just has departed, Colonel Dumont," said La Montagne, in fear and trembling.

"Can not you, then?" asked Frontenac.

"No, Your Excellency. The Montagnais had failed to keep his appointment, and as this Indian was near at hand—"

"He was taken?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"One would think, if there were such things, that it was an intervention of Providence on her behalf. Yet it may not be as we have said. She may have been carried off against her will. The words spoken by her may well have been those of surprise as well as of love. She became insensible?"

"Yes, Your Excellency," replied La Montagne.

"Then, let the search proceed. If it be so, she shall be restored to her husband. If it be otherwise, she must be punished. It is treason to the King, and in such case she shall suffer, as others have suffered, the penalty of her misconduct. Rescue or punishment, such it shall be, and I direct that every effort be made, and without delay, to that end. Meanwhile, send Captain St. Just to me."

As Frontenac addressed these words to Colonel Dumont his rage revived, and La Montagne trembled for the safety of his friend.

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Colonel Dumont, rising and bowing, "it shall be done, and with all thoroughness and speed."

"For God's sake, fly—pursue her—go anywhere, but go!"

As La Montagne directed these words of energy and good counsel to St. Just, whom he had met as they turned a corner of the street, the latter drew back in astonishment.

"What is the matter?" gasped St. Just.

"His Excellency has given orders that you be

brought before him to explain your taking of the Huron at haphazard when the Montagnais failed you."

"And who told him? I did not."

"No, I did. He demanded it."

"Pah!" exclaimed St. Just, in contemptuous disgust. "But you approved. I told you of it."

"Me?"

"Yes, you. I shall explain to His Excellency, too. It is also my duty."

"You will not say that?" said La Montagne.

"Shan't I?" and St. Just gave a knowing and determined wag of his head.

"Then pursue her," said La Montagne. "Lose not a moment. I shall report that you have gone."

"I think I had better be off; but if you play me shrew—" and as St. Just turned to hurry away into Lower Town he raised his finger in momentous warning.

"Be gone!" cried La Montagne. "This will save us."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Not since the recall of Frontenac himself, if even then, had there been such excitement in Quebec as when the news of Marcelle's abduction became noised abroad. The efforts to effect her rescue for a time wholly occupied public attention, but as one by one the searchers returned without any trace of her, curiosity gave place to apprehension, to be succeeded in turn by all manner of gossip and speculation. Some, as before, were of opinion that it was an Iroquois, and not a Huron, who had carried her away, and that he had been waiting, undetected, for a favorable opportunity. Others maintained that Marcelle must be in hiding in the city; that it was impossible that she should have been carried off without leaving so much as a suspicion of the direction in which she had gone. Many affirmed that she would be recovered in a short time, while not a few threw out hints that they had said all along that this was what would come of His Excellency's determination to have a play, and of his taking up with an upstart from the wilderness.

Madame Béranger was delighted. "I hope she is dead," she said, in jubilant confidence, to Madame Bernard-Pallu; "then Philippe Beauharnais can marry again; and it is to be hoped that he will marry a lady this time. Besides, we know, if others do not, that it is impossible to defy the Bishop."

"That is true," assented Madame Bernard-Pallu, seriously. "If even one so great as His Excellency presumes to deny the Church we know what must come of it."

"Certainly," said Madame Béranger, "everybody is talking about it. Some say that His Excellency will have to do penance for this, or he will be held responsible by the Bishop."

"What will it be?"

"A public apology," replied Madame Béranger, positively, "and I hope it will bring Frontenac to his senses."

Meanwhile, organized parties were despatched in all directions in quest of the Huron and his captive. La Montagne, who reported that St. Just had gone alone, or at most with a single coureur-de-bois, upon a trail which he had discovered that would prove without doubt to be the true one, was commended for his energy and ordered to take soldiers and depart to his aid.

Colonel Dumont, like Frontenac, was impressed with the seriousness of the situation, since it would lead to ecclesiastical ascendancy and the consequent decline of the military power if the Bishop, as he was sure to do, should take advantage of popular credulity and surprise, and endeavor to convince the people that the failure of His Excellency's plans was due, not to human, but to divine intervention. He therefore set himself to the task of making search with energy and determination.

Procuring runners from the Huron colony of

Orleans and from the Montagnais villages near at hand, he drilled them thoroughly in the circumstances and conditions of Marcelle's origin, her home by the lake of the Hurons, her coming to Quebec, her fondness for the Huron chief, the wedding, the presentation of the play, the substitution of the Huron for the Montagnais, his capture of Marcelle and immediate disappearance. These facts were presented to them, not that they should tell to all whom they might reach the history of the case, but that they might seek for the fugitives with plans of their own making, since it is well known that Indians alone understand Indians and can at all times best act upon their own judgment. Of their fidelity there was no doubt, but to make it doubly sure, rewards were promised of a considerable amount, to be doubled for those who should contribute to Marcelle's rescue, and to be increased fourfold to those who should effect it.

"I think with this, Your Excellency, there is every probability of succeeding," said Colonel Dumont to Frontenac, at one of the consultations which they now held both morning and evening.

"What of Captain St. Just?" asked His Excellency.

"Major La Montagne reports that he departed, without orders, upon a trail which he had suddenly discovered, and which required following up without delay."

"Yes, I hope there is something," said Frontenac. "Do you know, Dumont, there is something strange in all this, which I trust will be explained when Marcelle returns. Her Excellency is of opinion, upon

running over in her mind the history and conversation of the girl, that she married Major Beauharnais in good faith, but upon seeing the Huron, for whom she had, no doubt, at one time cherished a certain fondness, she became dazed, but that, when she comes to her senses, she will insist upon being taken back to Quebec, and this will be done."

"But what of the Huron? Will he obey her, Your Excellency?" asked Colonel Dumont, doubtfully.

"He may not, it is true," replied Frontenac, "but Marcelle will find means to escape him. By the way, have you heard from Beauharnais?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. He is now at Lac aux Épines, having crossed the country to that water, from which he has sent me word."

"Poor fellow!" said Frontenac, tenderly; "what does he report?"

"His hopes, Your Excellency."

"Hopes? Then he is not without hope. He bears it well. I had been afraid otherwise."

"He is a soldier, Your Excellency," said Dumont, with a touch of pride.

"True, Dumont, and no doubt will bear his misfortune with becoming fortitude. But it will all come right in the end. I have made up my mind to that. If Marcelle's abduction has been brought about without her connivance, her rescue will be her wish; if with it, it shall be her punishment. I am not to be disobeyed for a freak of fancy and an Indian's tale of love." Frontenac spoke in a tone of mingled indignation and bitterness.

There was a knock at the door. The servant announced a messenger for Colonel Dumont.

"It is a message from Captain St. Just, Your Excellency," said Colonel Dumont, returning.

"What news from that military coxcomb?" exclaimed Frontenac, with a sneer.

"It is, if Your Excelleney will read it—"

"Read it to me, Dumont. I am in no mood to read just now," said Frontenac, sharply.

The letter ran as follows: "Dear Colonel Dumont,—After leaving the city I started off in a canoe to explore the river up above, where I was confident there would be some trace of them. I met a coureur-de-bois whom I knew, and persuaded him, upon the promise of good pay, to go with me. This man, who is three-quarters Montagnais and very cunning, when he heard that the Huron and Madame Beauharnais had left no trace, directed me to skirt the shore, for as he said, 'the Huron has put his canoe in farther up.' Sure enough the quick eye of the coureur detected a sign of recent footsteps, and as this was the only trail I had heard of I started, hoping to overtake them, as there were now two of us in one canoe, and only one in the other, to do the paddling—that is, not counting Marcelle. We kept to the north shore all that day till we came to Valois village, and then we got trace of them. They had landed not far away, and had been seen going into the interior. The Huron was carrying Marcelle over his shoulder, and had destroyed his canoe. What could that have been for, do you think? The coureur thinks it must have been done

in a fit of rage, but I think that it was to prevent Marcelle's making her escape. There are only two trails now for them to strike, the Ottawa and the Huron. It looks to me as if the Huron would take the latter, and hurry to the far interior. If Major La Montagne takes the north route, and then, when he reaches the upper waters, throws out scouts, it is, if I may say so, quite possible that the Huron, encumbered with a woman unable to stand very much fatigue, might be cornered and taken. I shall wait here for further orders from you."

"Send them, Dumont!" cried Frontenac, his eyes flashing. "Send them; I am in hot haste now. They must be taken. What is that again about the Indian's destroying his canoe?"

"To prevent Madame Beauharnais' escape, Your Excellency."

"Yes."

"It looks as if he suspected her of that intention," said Colonel Dumont.

"The dear girl! Make all haste. Let Major La Montagne take whom and what he pleases."

Frontenac arose, smiling for the first time during the interview, and Colonel Dumont hurried away to instruct Major La Montagne.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

When Marcelle, upon the fateful night of the play, looked up in response to the pre-arranged signal, expecting to find that the Montagnais had arrived for her rescue from the sleeping Iroquois, she was stricken almost instantly into insensibility by the appearance of her beloved Huron himself. Nature was not strong enough to withstand the rush of emotion which, embodying as it did the hope of earlier years, the regret of later, and the last faint longing upon her wedding-day, overcame her consciousness, and threw her into a deep sleep. With that instant intuition characteristic of the Indian, the Huron saw at a glance that Marcelle had not forgotten him, and if a doubt remained, the appealing cry with which she exclaimed, "The Huron!" was enough. Seizing her as directed and conveying her behind the scenes, he moved swiftly towards the doorway, and disappeared into the street, carrying his insensible but precious burden. With incredible speed, and favored by the slowness of pursuit, the Huron reached the top of the terrace-wall, and creeping along the outside edge, which lay in a deep shade, he came to the pathway leading to the water which at a later date afforded means of ascending the cliff to the British under General Wolfe. At the foot of this pathway he had concealed

his canoe in the dense underbrush. Laying Marcelle gently upon the bank, he disengaged it from its hiding-place. In another instant he had placed her in it and was paddling with all speed for the southern shore.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, with a feeling of relief as he reached the deep shadow of the forest thrown by the moon far out upon the water. Then, like a deer listening for the hounds upon his trail, he paused and harkened for sounds of pursuit. The river farther up wound so as to throw the protecting shadows once more upon the north shore. The Huron paddled quietly till he came to the point where the shadows fell the other way, and then changing his paddle to his left hand, so that the gleams of the moonbeams upon its blade might not betray him to pursuers, he turned his bow and continued northward till he reached the shelter of the other shore. Since starting from the foot of the cliff, when he threw a small fox-skin over Marcelle's throat and shoulders to protect her from the night air, he had not had time to give her more than a passing glance. Every faculty had been strained to escape pursuit. But now for a moment he breathed more freely, and leaning forward he pulled the neckwrap closer, and, undoing the fur pouch at his girdle, put it across her hands, which felt cold to his touch, while over her feet he placed his buckskin shirt, leaving his chest bare to the night-wind, now blowing strongly from the east. With one look of unfathomable love and tenderness the hunted Huron began his exertions anew, and drove the canoe

forward with renewed vigor. At last the day dawned, and it was necessary to go ashore to escape detection. With searching look he was scanning the shore-line and the edge of the forest for an opening that would enable him to land and carry Marcelle safely through it to the top of the cliff-like banks of the great river, when the sound of a voice startled him.

"Oh, Huron, and it is really you?" said Marcelle, her soft voice further subdued by fatigue and the overwhelming emotion of their meeting.

"Yes, Marcelle," said the Huron, turning towards her as he withdrew his gaze from the woods. His broad chest still rose and fell with his deep breathing.

"And you came at last," she said.

"Did the Dawnflower expect me, then?" asked the Huron, delightedly.

"Not expected you, Huron, but hoped. Why did you come?" she added, languidly.

"Because the Huron loved you as the stars. He was mad with loneliness."

"I thought you had forgotten me. You were so long in coming."

"The Huron could not, even when the Dawnflower deserted us."

"Nay, Huron, do not speak so. Have I not proved my love?" asked Marcelle, tearfully, yet feeling the apparent justice of his reply.

"Then you love the Huron?" he asked, earnestly.

"As my life—nay, more," said Marcelle.

"Black John will be glad," said the Huron, evasively, although his gleaming eyes betrayed the joy he felt.

"Is that a voice? I hear a sound!" said Marcelle, starting up.

The Indian listened. "We must fly. The Frenchman is on our trail."

He ran the canoe into the bushes and stepped ashore. Then tenderly he raised Marcelle to her feet.

"You will have to carry me, Huron, for a little. I am weak, but I will soon be strong."

The Huron took her in his arms. All day long they journeyed through the forest, and at nightfall sought a place of shelter where none could approach without giving warning. The rest brought back strength to Marcelle's limbs, and she was able to follow the Huron without help or waiting.

"We will soon be at the Megawah," said the Huron, as the Manitou mountain came in sight from the edge of the elm wood.

"And then?"

"I have my canoe there."

"Heaven be thanked," said Marcelle. "We may escape yet."

There was a sound of footsteps. The fugitives stood as still as the trees above them. Then a shrill cry resounded through the wood. It was the signal of one runner to the others. They were discovered.

"What shall we do, Huron?" whispered Marcelle, drawing close to him, and looking beseechingly into his eyes.

He turned to her with a glance of infinite tenderness.

"Does the Dawnflower love the Huron enough to die with him? Will she go to the hunting-grounds with him?"

Marcelle put her hand upon his arm. "You would not kill yourself, Huron?"

"The French will slay me."

"That could not be," said Marcelle, trembling with fear; "and yet if I thought that Frontenac would take vengeance and punish you I would die with you. My heart would break. I should weep forever. No, Huron, we must not—cannot part."

As they stood in each other's embrace the sound of those coming in at the first signal of the scout increased in volume until it was plain that in a moment their pursuers would be upon them.

"Fly, Huron. Fly, I beseech you. I will remain, and be taken prisoner. They will not kill me. There will then be hope. But you, my love, must escape lest they dare kill you. His Excellency will protect me."

Marcelle continued urging him, but the Huron shook his head sadly.

Now and then he raised his head to listen, and his eye gleamed with the defiance of battle.

"No, sweet one, it cannot be. Where you go I go. When the doe is robbed of its fawn it cares nothing for death. Neither care I."

"But we must live, Huron. We shall live!" cried Marcelle, in sudden frenzy. "Those who love so cannot be separated."

"Hark! They come," said the Indian, stolidly.

"Shall we then give ourselves up?" asked Marcelle.

"Yes," replied the Huron, who realized the hopelessness of an attempt at escape.

"Then if they harm you they shall kill me. I will not live. I will tell them that." Marcelle's eyes gleamed with anger as the spirit of the defiant coureur re-animated her trembling frame.

A number of Indians and soldiers had formed an invisible circle about them, and now closed in.

"Do you and the Indian surrender, Madame Beauharnais?" called La Montagne, advancing to where they stood, his sword drawn.

"Is the Huron to be taken to Quebec and treated like an English prisoner?" asked Marcelle, turning at the sound of La Montagne's voice, and stretching out her hand towards him.

"As for that I cannot say. We are instructed to catch you both if possible, but you at all hazard. For the Indian, it matters little whether alive or dead."

"But you will pledge your word not to harm him till he is tried by His Excellency."

"I will promise you, Madame Beauharnais, that I will carry out my orders to the letter. It is not for me to say. I command you to return with me to Quebec. As for the Indian, I shall shoot him if he resists."

"If you will not harm us, then, we will return with you," replied Marcelle, speaking in a low tone to the Huron, who advanced with her and placed himself in the hands of the King's officer.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE flight of Marcelle, the beautiful favorite of Frontenac, from his court into the wilderness, producing a great sensation in Quebec, gave rise to a variety of speculations with respect to its cause. At the first the impression of the people at large, who knew little at any time of the inner workings of society at the Chateau, was, as we have seen, that an Iroquois had with consummate boldness entered the buildings during the progress of the evening's entertainment and carried off the newly-wedded wife of the heir of Beauharnais. Others averred that it was a direct judgment upon the Governor for his continued opposition to the Bishop, and that the humble Indian was merely the instrument of a higher power. Yet another class, chiefly those connected with trade, held stoutly to the opinion that it was a case of robbery, and that Marcelle had been carried away in order that the crime might remain undetected in the confusion until the robbers should have got well away. There were those, too, who maintained otherwise.

"It's a Godsend to the country. I said from the first I heard of her and her grand airs that she was an English spy. Mon dieu! It is terrible to think that one who can speak the French tongue should turn upon us like that."

Old Jacques, who wagged his head to emphasize the profound character of his thoughts and conclusions, was a former pilot on the river. He continued:

"I have seen too many strange things in my time to take everything for what they say it is. There are many people in this world who are diplomats, as they call themselves, whose business it is to keep friends with everybody. Such people often keep friends with thieves as a consequence, and spies, who are the same as thieves. They in time get their deserts, but it is not before misfortune comes to our country."

"What do you mean, Jacques?" said his old comrade, a sailor and sea-fisherman of former days. "I have heard you speak of spies before, but you did not say where."

"I did," replied Jacques, sharply. "Have I not told you and Madore there that Frontenac was bewitched by a strange woman? Am I fool enough to believe what these people say, who come from Heaven knows where?"

"But she married the heir of Beauharnais," interposed Madore. "They are not so foolish as to allow that."

"You think so," said Jacques, contemptuously; "and I suppose when all this chasing is over and Philippe Beauharnais settles down again, and His Excellency has got back his senses, we shall hear the truth. Here was a fine yarn she spun for them—how she lived at the Great Bay, and had been taken prisoner by a Mohawk, but escaped, and was then rescued by His Excellency. It isn't everyone who can be

conveniently rescued in this fashion. I have no faith in women."

"But you had a wife."

"Yes, and thank God she's dead, although she did what she could, I suppose, poor woman. I shouldn't speak like that." Jacques muttered a prayer or two in expiation of his offence. "Women don't want to do a thing because it's right. Mon dieu! No," he resumed. "That is too tame for them. They have no character. That is why the best spies are women. They would fool the devil."

"They say she will not be free long, anyhow," said Madore.

"I am sorry for that," said Jacques. "We were well rid of her at any price. If she comes back now she will only make things worse. She may run off with Frontenac himself next time."

"You are talking treason," said Madore, who loved to poke fun at the old pilot.

"Treason! treason!" said he, scoffingly. "As if it is treason to try to save the country. I don't know what's going to come of it all, but I am mistaken if you don't see the Mohawks down on us like a thousand devils."

"Who cares if they do," said Madore. "We beat the English, and we can beat the Mohawks."

"Pah!" replied Jacques. "One Iroquois is worth two Englishmen. The English are cowards. Didn't they clear out? It wasn't we who beat them. It was their own faint hearts. If they had stayed a week longer we should have been starved to death." The old man hobbled to the door.

"Good day, Monsieur Jacques," said a passing acquaintance.

"You have heard of His Excellency's catch?"

"No. What is it?" cried Madore, running to the doorway, having caught the last words.

"Marcelle, the English spy, as I call her, has been caught, and her Mohawk husband. There'll be some fine hanging over this."

"When did you hear it?"

"This morning. They are not far away by now. They will be here, Henri says, by noon."

"It is nearly that now," said Madore, taking a look at the sun.

"Yes, but they will fire the gun."

The gun at the citadel was often fired between times to warn the inhabitants to keep within doors or to alarm the guard and soldiers on holiday leave.

"Now he is mistaken. They are coming yonder. He is always wrong."

Some dust arose in the distance as a body of people, some riding, others walking, came into view. A lady sat upon a cushion upon the back of a horse, which was led by a soldier. It was Marcelle. She was pale and fatigued, as if a long journey without sleep had told upon her. She shunned the gaze of the onlookers and kept her eyes fixed on the ground. La Montagne brought up the rear, where he could keep a watch upon everything. Strapped to two Montagnais, between whom he walked, was the Huron. His face was stolid and expressionless. A crowd of curious people accompanied them as far as the gate of the square.

With the exception of the sentry, no one appeared. The gate was closed and barred. Marcelle was handed down from her horse and conducted into the Château. The Huron was consigned to the prison in the rear of the fort.

Two maids appeared and escorted Marcelle to her old apartments. Presently the old housekeeper entered.

"His Excellency will see Madame Beauharnais when she is rested and dressed," she said.

Marcelle was about to return thanks for the respite, when she thought of the Huron. They might do him injury if she waited.

"I will see His Excellency, Mathilde, at once, if he will see me," she said. "It will take me but a moment to get ready."

The woman took the message and returned.

"His Excellency will see Madame Beauharnais when she is ready," said Mathilde, with cold and ominous formality.

As Marcelle was led into the presence of the great governor her courage almost failed her. But her own fate and that of her lover hung in the balance, and she resolved to be brave. For a moment she stood in the presence of His Excellency before he raised his eyes to look at her. Then he fixed them upon her with that glittering coldness which had often terrified her when he looked at those who had displeased him. At length he spoke.

"You have returned?" said he, with a touch of irony in his tone.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Have you nothing to say?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"Is it true that you planned the escape?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"But it was 'the Huron,'" exclaimed Frontenac, almost angrily.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Sit down, Marcelle, you look tired." The tone of Frontenac's voice as he said this startled Marcelle.

"Oh, Your Excellency, have mercy!"

"Yes, I shall have mercy upon you, although you had none for Major Beauharnais, whom you have attempted to dishonor."

Marcelle flushed with the color of a shame of which she did not feel guilty.

Frontenac waited with cruel deliberation, then he continued:

"I took you in when you were a homeless wanderer, and now you have treated me as no woman ever dared to do before. How could you have dared? Speak, I will have your explanation."

"I love the Huron—" Marcelle began, tremblingly, but Frontenac cut her short instantly.

"The dog!" he exclaimed, with passion, moving uneasily in his chair. "Have you no shame, when you had wedded Beauharnais?"

Marcelle would have kept silence, but the piercing eye of her inquisitor bade her speak.

"I have no excuse to offer, Your Excellency."

"You have well spoken," said Frontenac, in a milder

tone. "What excuse could there be? You have broken your promise to me. You have broken your vow to Beauharnais. No squaw of the Abenaquis could have done worse. How I have been mistaken! Well, if Mother Marie de l'Incarnation will take you in once more, sin-stained as you are, she shall have you. I shall give immediate orders for your disposal."

"But the Huron?" cried Marcelle, in extreme agitation.

Frontenac, who had risen, turned a look of deep disdain upon her.

"You dare, then, to mention his name again in my presence!" he cried. "He shall have such a punishment as traitors have."

"Oh, God!" cried Marcelle, falling at his feet. "Have mercy, Your Excellency."

She rested her head upon the floor.

Frontenac looked at her for an instant, and then smiled triumphantly.

"You! Is it you," he exclaimed, "who ask for mercy? Shame upon you! I might have—nay, I ought to have known. But you do not wish, then, to go back to the convent?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, I will go," said Marcelle, submissively. The unexpected reply calmed and touched the heart of Frontenac.

"Rise, Marcelle," said he, gently, giving her his hand. But she drew back from it and remained kneeling.

"I am unworthy of the honor, Your Excellency," she said, tearfully.

"Rise, Marcelle, as I command. This business is strange. I have known strange women and false ones. But this that you have done passes my comprehension. Are you mad?"

"I loved the Huron—"

"Have done!" cried Frontenac, in a momentary fury. "Am I to be sold for a dog of a Huron? Speak, and speak the truth, or it shall be worse for you."

Marcelle was stricken with fear and awe at the sudden outburst. Then, after a pause, Frontenac resumed, but in a calmer tone:

"You have played me false. Do you deny it?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"You confess with readiness. You seem used to it. You played Beauharnais false."

Marcelle did not speak.

"Do you deny it?"

"I was never true to him, Your Excellency. I did not love him."

"Pardieu! What a woman. And yet you married him? Do you jest with me?"

"Oh, no, Your Excellency," replied Marcelle, timidly.

"What, then? Is your heart of stone? Come, Marcelle, this interview must close. How came you to desert us and dishonor us? I have been your friend. I have been such an one as a father would have been. You did not want for anything. The place of honor, too, was always yours. If I rode you rode with me. If I walked, if I sang—yes, even at the council-house it was you, always you."

Marcelle was deeply affected by this reference to her kind treatment, and continued to weep as if her heart was breaking.

With a sigh of sorrow and disappointment Frontenac resumed his chair.

"Cease, Marcelle. I cannot bear to see you weeping thus. Tell me—tell me but the truth. Will you not even tell me that?"

"It was a sudden madness coming over me, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, looking up and endeavoring to explain. "Once I had loved the Huron far off by the lake of the Hurons in my home when I lived with my father. But I did not then know what it was to love. I could smile or frown, and it made the Huron glad or angry. Often have I thought of the wilderness, and of my father, and of the cabin by the spring; of my dog, of the birds in the trees, of the former glory of the Hurons, my mother's race, of the winds of winter coming through the bare trees and whistling through the roof-thatch. The fire would roar up the chimney, and the Huron would come in. He chatted with my father. They spoke of trade, of the English, of the French, of Your Excellency, and then the Huron would speak to me. He was always gentle when he spoke to me. His deep, soft voice was the voice of love, but I did not know it then. I wished for the city and the gay life of the city. I grew tired of the forest and of teasing the chief. But when I came you treated me so kindly I grew fond of you, as your own daughter might have been. I was proud of the great Governor, who

spoke to me, and took me with him, and never found fault. But when I lifted my eyes and saw the Huron my senses left me. I would have given all I had, my very life, to the Huron. It was the strange frenzy of a woman, Your Excellency. But I could not help it. My very soul was his. When I awoke I found it true. He, too, had dreamed of me, and loved me still. He came, unknown to me, to seek me out, and chance falling in his way he found me. God forgive me for my sins."

"Marcelle, you evidently think that love excuses everything," said Frontenac, looking at her half in admiration, half in anger.

"Of that I do not know. If I am to be punished, I beg Your Excellency to pronounce sentence upon me, but spare the Huron."

"Again!" cried Frontenac, who wondered at her defiance of him in repeating that name.

At last Frontenac's pity was moved by Marcelle's utter desolation, and he bade her retire till such time as he should send her word of his decision.

"But, Your Excellency—"

"Yes, I will spare him in the meantime," said Frontenac, impatiently.

Marcelle withdrew.

CHAPTER XL.

When Marcelle had been conducted back to her place of retirement in the Château, she threw herself upon the couch in an agony of suspense and apprehension. Knowing that Frontenac, whilst he might be lenient with her to the extent of devising some form of punishment which would reduce her to the position of a wilful and disobedient girl, undergoing a mild form of chastisement, would deal very differently with her lover, the fatal "meantime" which he had made use of in his pledge of respite for the Huron had full significance in Marcelle's estimation. She knew that an Indian had no standing such as that enjoyed by a French citizen in the eye of the law, and since the chief belonged not to the dreaded Iroquois, but to the dispersed and despised Hurons, no question of state could intervene to save him in case the penalty of death were decided upon. To the mind of Frontenac the crime of the Indian was that of stealing, the taking off of a precious jewel, and as such to be punished accordingly. The crime of Marcelle he considered a moral one, in which she had set at naught the morality of married life, the ordinances of the Church, and last, but not least, her duty to himself. While her offence was unpardonable, and of an atrocious kind, it was not of the common

sort which included infractions of the law of the land. That it merited punishment was already decided by him, but in what form he had not made up his mind. The Huron he would leave to the tender mercies of the Sovereign Council having jurisdiction in such matters, and with this in view he directed that it should be called together. The excitement of the public mind following the announcement of the calling together of the great Council increased when it was known what was the reason of its assembling, since it was fully expected that the Bishop would attend—an event as important as it was rare.

The Governor was much annoyed when, on turning the corner of the street leading to the council-house, he found that a large number of people had assembled there, amongst them being many coureurs-de-bois.

"What do all these people seek, think you, Dumont?" inquired Frontenac, as a deep shadow of displeasure fell upon his countenance. "Is it merely curiosity?"

"That is what I should think, Your Excellency," replied that officer. "It is certainly not out of sympathy with either of the offenders."

"But the coureurs—what brings them here? They are idle, but not merely curious, as a rule," continued Frontenac, scanning the crowd for signs of explanation.

A cheer burst forth.

"Ah! that is better. A silent crowd means mischief. I am confident, notwithstanding the information brought in by Duplessis, that the public at large will be pleased to see the moral and civil law upheld."

"By a severe punishment, Your Excellency?"

"Yes."

"I am afraid, Your Excellency, it is otherwise," answered Dumont, respectfully, upon whose candor and honesty Frontenac placed great reliance.

Frontenac was astonished.

"It is impossible, Dumont. The people are good Catholics."

"Only some, Your Excellency."

"True, many, especially the coureurs, have no religion."

"It is they who speak so strongly."

"Then you, too, have information. Speak, Dumont. You should have done so before."

"They say," replied Dumont, "that Your Excellency compelled her to marry Beauharnais."

"It is false," said Frontenac, angrily, as he descended from his carriage and entered his private room. "It was of her own free will. At no time did I use compulsion, or do other than give advice such as, being her guardian, I was called upon to give. It would have all gone well but for the Indian. His appearance spoiled all my plans. He shall die. He is a traitor."

The members of the Council having arrived, they were formally called together, the Intendant, as usual, taking the chair. The Bishop did not appear, for word had been sent him that Marcelle would not be proceeded against under the criminal law, and would not be cited to appear before the Council. The Huron

was put upon his trial. He was dressed merely in the scanty costume in which he had been taken, a pair of fringed buckskin trousers and moccasins. The muscles of his neck, shoulders and chest stood out in bold relief to the admiration of those who had an eye for manly beauty. When bidden to rise to hear the reading of the charge, he complied readily, but one could see in his defiant bearing and flashing eyes that but for the manacles that held him securely the task of his guards would not have been an easy one. The evidence as to identity, and of his conduct in violation of the law, was, of course, direct and conclusive, and it remained but for Frontenac to pronounce the sentence of death.

The expectant members of the Council, failing to hear the pronouncement of the Huron's doom, since Frontenac paused, as if reluctant to give the fatal word, fell to talking with each other. The hum of voices recalled him to himself, and without further waiting he turned to the clerk and said coldly,

"Let it be entered as the sentence of death."

The sentence having been read aloud, in compliance with the usual procedure, the Huron was still more heavily bound and then conveyed away. Cavalry escorted the carriage in which he was driven to the fort itself, in order that no chance should be given would-be rescuers of releasing so important a criminal.

Upon the morrow, at sunrise, he would undergo the penalty of death by shooting, for the councillors in general had been averse to hanging him, since

Marcelle had consented to her own abduction. Had Frontenac protested, or had Philippe Beauharnais intervened, the more dreaded and disgraceful death by hanging would have been substituted, but the Governor was depressed by a sense of grief and responsibility which, like a cloud, shadowed his usual good-nature, and ever and anon suggested to him that neither propriety, nor statutes, nor the decrees of judges, could shake the hearts of lovers. He had himself been in his earlier days a man of deep feeling and tenderness. This happier time was recalled to him by the pleadings of Marcelle and the approaching death of the Huron. His mind's eye, wandering to the cabin in the forest which she had so often described to him, saw there the half-breed girl and her Indian lover, the one the very flower of girlish loveliness, untamed and forest-born, the other almost unmatched amongst the Indian race for manly beauty and the heroic qualities of the red man. Was it the Huron's fault that love should have proved too strong, and should have drawn him to the very door of death itself? There was something so brave, so natural in the action of the heroic savage that the chivalrous Frenchman felt his heart relent. Beauharnais had not yet returned.

"No, I cannot slay this man, much as he has done. In similar circumstances I should have done the same myself. No life has he taken, nor has he shed one drop of blood. Poor Philippe! When Marcelle protested I ignored it, for who would have dreamed that all this unhappiness would have come to pass.

Love, it seems, is greater than death, for it defies it. So once I felt myself in France—in good, in beautiful France. Nay, he must not die. I shall defer the sentence, at least till my heart is harder. I am too old to slay men and women for loving and being true. I cannot go into my grave with this reproach of cruelty. God forbid!"

As Frontenac paced the floor in meditation he suddenly wheeled and approached the door.

"Send Colonel Dumont to me," he directed.

As Colonel Dumont entered the room Frontenac arose.

"The Indian must not be shot to-morrow," he said.

Dumont looked at him in surprise. Did Frontenac demand a severer sentence?

"Dumont, I make a confidant of you. I cannot consent to this brave Huron's death. He has committed no fault, no treason to all that he who once has loved has faith in. He has disappointed me of my intention to reward Beauharnais. But Beauharnais shall have to find another and, perhaps, more suitable companion."

"That would displease His Lordship," said Dumont, in the tone of one who ventures to suggest what may have been overlooked.

"Think you so?" asked Frontenac, eagerly.

"Your Excellency is aware that the sacrament of marriage has been violated. That is equal with murder in the Bishop's eyes."

"True," said Frontenac, reflectively; "and yet there is something wanting to constitute the crime.

I cannot undertake to please His Lordship. We must have more of the spirit of the divine law and less of the letter written in blood. Besides, I am not certain but that those who murder love commit the greater crime."

"They have been faithful," remarked Dumont, quietly.

"Through years of trial," added Frontenac, quickly. "It is we who would rob the red man. It is not he who has robbed us. No, it cannot be. He must not be shot. Bring him before me. If Beauharnais should return send him in at once."

CHAPTER XLI.

"It is you, Beauharnais," said Frontenac, looking up. It was near the hour of midnight, and within but a few more hours of the time set for the Huron's execution. Frontenac had continued much depressed since the Council meeting.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"You look to have travelled far."

"I have come from the mountains east of the Nipissing country, and Colonel Dumont had left word that immediately upon my arrival I was to appear before Your Excellency."

"Yes; that was the direction which I gave. Sit down. You look travel-worn, but not tired. You have heard of Marcelle's return?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. She is now in the Château, I am informed. The Indian—"

"Has been doomed to die. What think you?"

"If ever there was a just sentence it is one," exclaimed Beauharnais, with a burst of passion.

"You, then, think he should die?"

"No moment is too soon. But perhaps Your Excellency thinks differently?"

"Yes, Beauharnais, I do—but it shall rest with you. You have been wronged, but not by the Indian alone.

Marcelle consented to the abduction when she came to her senses."

"My God! It is then true," said Beauharnais, in a choking whisper, while his eyes wandered as if he were beside himself.

"It is too bad—too bad!" said Frontenac, who viewed Beauharnais's agitation with sympathy. "But I would recommend to you that you should bear your part with dignity. She loves the Huron —that is certain."

"Beyond doubt?"

"Yes, beyond all doubt. To hear her plead for him one must know that."

"But when he is dead, Your Excellency, it may be that she will then think no more of him. Women are fickle."

"Not Marcelle," said Frontenac. "She has refused birth, fortune and the privileges of my court for the Huron. That is not fickleness. It is love. Would it not be well to let them go free?"

"Your Excellency," exclaimed Beauharnais, starting up wildly, "am I to lose my wife, and shall there be no vengeance on the Huron?"

"Yes. It is hard. He must die!" Pity and firmness ebbed and flowed in Frontenac's heart as upon his lips.

"Will the Church consent to my degradation?" asked Beauharnais, boldly. "It is a crime past all redemption."

Frontenac reflected. It was true. All—even the Bishop himself—would concur in the justice of the

punishment. Public opinion would support the act of vengeance and of retribution. Nothing would restore the equilibrium of the public mind unless it brought with it the satisfaction of the Bishop and Beauharnais.

"If, then, the Indian is shot—"

"Then Marcelle is mine again. It is simple; it is plain. If I consent, then naught remains—"

"That is true, Philippe. If you consent it is as if a necklace had been stolen and recovered, or some such jewel; nothing more."

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Beauharnais, with delight.

"But if the Indian lives?"

"Then the crime is black as night, and Marcelle is lost to me. Her love for him will remain. At the first opportunity she will leave me."

"Yes; there is but one way for it—the Huron must die. His death is expiation, and that alone."

"Then he shall die, Your Excellency?"

"Yes. Tell Colonel Dumont that I wish to see him."

"I am Your Excellency's most devoted and grateful servant."

"Your Excellency sent Major Beauharnais for me?" inquired Colonel Dumont.

"Yes, Dumont, and it is as well that you did not bring the Indian. On reflection, I think I shall have to give up my romantic ideas regarding this affair of the heart and treat it as a plain matter of business or of policy. Would not that, after all, be the safest and the best plan?"

"Is Your Excellency aware that the coureurs-de bois are restless?"

"What about? They do not dare to question my authority?" asked Frontenac, angrily.

"No, Your Excellency."

"Then what?"

"They do not speak—so far, at least—of rebellion, merely demurring to your Excellency's punishment of Marcelle."

"I have not punished her."

"It will be a severe punishment to her, they say, if the Indian be sacrificed."

"Shall he who robbed Beauharnais of a wife, me of my plans, and the Church of a soul, go unpunished?"

"Of course, they care nothing for the Church."

"But the Bishop?"

"They think him an old woman."

"Do they? They are not so far astray in that; but I will not be threatened. Did you see Dilbot?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"What did he say?"

"He said that it was hard, when the coureurs had done so much for you, that you would not deal more gently with their queen."

"Fudge!"

"But they mean it."

"What care they?"

"It matters much to them, Your Excellency, and Dilbot says that the English may come, but they will never hinder them again from taking what they please of Quebec."

"Pray what would they themselves do?"

"Retire, he says, into the wilderness, which is large enough for them; and besides, the game is going farther north."

"The boobies! Do they not know that it will be as bad for them if the English get possession, even nominally, of our dominion? But I am greatly worried over this. Had Marcelle refused to marry Beauharnais it would have saved us from this miserable failure and all harshness. Send for Marcelle. I will speak with her."

During Colonel Dumont's absence Frontenac reflected.

"I will recommend Beauharnais for his services so highly that the King will grant him whatever he wishes. If that will not please, then—but it must. Then the Bishop will complain of my want of discipline— Marcelle!"

"Yes, Your Excellency," said Marcelle, entering, tear-stained and disconsolate.

Frontenac paused and looked at her in deep distress.

"Why do you grieve so, Marcelle? You look as if the world had fled from you."

Frontenac spoke with gentleness and feeling. Marcelle did not reply, but looked steadily at the floor.

"Speak," said Frontenac. "You sent for Dilbot, did you not?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"But Colonel Dumont informs me that the coureurs are restless and tax me with being ungrateful. Have you not seen them?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"I thought, Dumont," said Frontenac, turning to him, "that they had spoken of Madame Beauharnais?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, but not because they had seen her. In fact, I learned from Dilbot that she refused to see him."

"Refused!" said Frontenac. "Why did you do that, Marcelle?"

"I would trust Your Excellency," she replied, simply.

"Then, though you have wronged me you would trust me?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Truly this is strange. I never heard before of this in France. However, you I do not intend to punish; with the Indian it is different."

"Will one life pay the full penalty, Your Excellency?" asked Marcelle, coldly.

"Yes," replied Frontenac.

"Then, take mine; without him it is nothing. I love the Huron and will gladly give my life for him. Spare him, I beseech Your Excellency."

"Marcelle!" exclaimed Frontenac, his voice trembling perceptibly, "do you love him so?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Then you both are pardoned. God forbid—" Frontenac turned his face to the wall and for a moment was silent. Then, turning again, he addressed Colonel Dumont:

"Dumont, I care not what the people say, or Monseigneur. It is beyond me to crush a love like

this. Go and bring the Huron to me that I may see him." Then turning to Marcelle: "I have read your agony in your eyes, Marcelle. You and I, too, perhaps, have done more in the affair of your marriage than we should have done. It is true that, as you say, you did not love Philippe, nor did you say so, yet his heart will break with his sorrow and disgrace. It is dreadful, and I have erred deeply in trying to mould, although unconsciously and with no evil intention, you and him to my policy. I will take the blame and forgive you."

Marcelle stood as if transfixed during the utterance of these words of pardon.

"Have you nothing to say, Marcelle?" asked Frontenac, who observed her embarrassment.

"Except to thank you, Your Excellency. But my words cannot express my gratitude."

"It will be best, of course, that you should depart into the interior without delay. It will save continued anguish to Beauharnais and the intolerable burden of general gossip. But tell me, Marcelle, since you put such trust in me, have you no regret at leaving us?"

"Nothing but the strange spell under which I am could induce me, even for the sake of home, to leave Your Excellency, although I should like to see my father once more, and the scenes of my childhood. Alas! how much I might have saved to you and to him had I not been filled with the curiosity and vanity of a young and thoughtless girl!"

"It is as you have said, Marcelle, but we can only

thank Heaven that it has not been worse. Here is the Huron."

As Frontenac bade them enter, Colonel Dumont and the Huron advanced into the room. The Huron's eye fell upon Marcelle and lighted up with pleasure.

"It is now but a short time till dawn. The play is ended. The tragedy which I had intended has finished otherwise. It has been a strange affair. I did not understand human nature as I thought. Huron, you have been brave and faithful. You are to be rewarded. I have pardoned you, and now let your departure be like your coming, unexpected. Take Marcelle and with her disappear into the wilderness. Some day I may, perchance, see you again, Marcelle. May you be happy; those who love are not always happy. I will give you a safe-conduct that you may encounter no hindrance. By the dawn you and the Huron will have begun a new life. Good-bye. Speak not a word, but be far on your journey when the sun has risen."

Frontenac took Marcelle's hand in his, and made a sign to Dumont. Without more ado the scene was ended and the silence of night fell once again upon the Château and its surroundings. Relieved in mind, for he was thankful that irritation had not impelled him to give way to severer measures, Frontenac sought his couch and sleep.

CHAPTER XLII.

FROM the moment of Marcelle's escape Black John and the Huron had never ceased to bemoan her absence, watching without hope for a sign of her return, picking up bits of news from travellers, going far upon the trail to meet or overtake her, cursing her for her wilfulness, but always resolving some day to have her with them again. The life of the wilderness was replete with tragedies, and had she been slain by her captors—for such in reality the two men considered the Frenchmen to be—it would have been merely one more of the incidents usual in the everyday life of the forest of the red men in times of so much stir and strife.

The season had now arrived when the trail of the hunter would be hard to follow, and the Huron matured his plans accordingly. Like a wise man he did not discuss them with Black John, for the free-trader had long since given himself over to brooding and melancholy. He took his departure silently for the great city of Quebec, where he had never been, and of which he knew nothing beyond hearsay, taking advantage of the absence of Black John amongst the Foxes, who of late had quarrelled openly with the Beavers and threatened by their turmoil to upset his trade, which, by some strange

perversity had become better and more remunerative since Marcelle had gone away. But even this enhancement of his fortune had not reconciled Black John to her absence. There was nothing that could do that, not even gold, which, as with the Jew, he would have parted with like teeth to save his much-beloved daughter. Knives, hatchets, beads, wampum, tobacco, and the promise of brandy he carried with him, and when he had disposed of them the chief of the Foxes said :

"Now, will white man join us against the Beavers?"

"No, I will not," returned the trader, emphatically. "You wish to make war merely to give your war-whoop and to kill. There is no reason in it. You Indians kill one another, and the French and English kill you both. Where will you be before long? Look at the Hurons. You will go the same way. The Iroquois will find you weakened and only the women and children remaining. What will they do then? Eh?"

The chief of the Foxes looked wise, and was silent. Then at length he spoke again, but not as before.

"It is true what the trader says. We are fools. We waste our blood and our scalps upon each other. The day will come when only the squaws and the children will remain. We are not wise, but we are like the wolves which turn on each other."

Black John was delighted to hear him talk in this fashion. "Then, next winter, you will go," he said, "to the region of the black fox and the silver, where they are in plenty, as they used to be here. You will trap

the beaver in new forests and by streams you have never heard of, much less seen. The Beavers will go westward to the great Bay, and will bring bear and buckskin to the market, as well as beaver. I, Black John, will buy all you have. I will move my little cabin to the Moskawa, for it is too much on the main trail now, and too many white men come to rob me of my goods. I will give you blankets for your squaws, and seed, so that you may grow maize like the Iroquois and have food for the winter-time. Then if the Iroquois want war you will be able to give it. You can join with the Ottawas, the Ojibways, the Mississagas, the Crows, the Dacotahs, against them. There is glory in that. There is no glory in killing each other. The scalp of a Beaver should never hang from the belt of a Fox."

These remarks of the trader were received with applause. One after the other the older chiefs, and then the younger, arose, and expressed their satisfaction.

"We will become a great nation," affirmed Crowfoot.

"Yes; you will be like the Iroquois, and greater They will hear you coming and will flee. Their scalps will hang from your girdles. The French, too, will be pleased. They will reward you with powder, and guns, and brandy."

The red men grunted with delight, and uttered frequently their "ough" of approval. Young braves stalked majestically to and fro looking to the south, as if the future lay for them in the country of the Iroquois.

Black John took his pack-strap and slung it over his back. He bade the Foxes good-bye. They had promised to make peace with the Beavers. He journeyed on to the Turtles, and spoke to them in the same manner. The sound of the great lake boomed pleasantly in his ears as he came in sight of the cabin, from which he had been absent since the ice went out of the rivers, but his heart quickened its beating as his eye caught signs of life. "It is the cursed Ottawas, or an Ojibway," he thought, as he approached boldly, for he was determined to save his property. But it was neither. It was Marcelle and the Huron! What joy he felt as he clasped Marcelle to his heart! He kissed her. He shook her hands and patted her on the back. Then he remonstrated with her and reproached her. But she was silent and happy through it all till he had finished, when she said:

"Father, I am home again, but I belong to the Huron, too, now. He has taken me for his wife and I have taken him, as the Hurons marry, for my husband. We shall live with you always, and—"

"You will leave us no more?" interposed Black John.

"Never again."

"Then we are happy. Eh, Huron?"

The Huron smiled and looked at Marcelle, but said nothing.

Summer and winter have many times succeeded each other. The wild flowers have bloomed in the forest, and fallen asleep till another season. The Iroquois

have been beaten back by the Mississagas, and the latter have adopted the Huron and made him a great chief. Black John lies buried by the waters of the lake of the Hurons. The great Frontenac himself has been gathered to his fathers. But Marcelle and the Huron fear not death. The waters of the spring sparkle in the sunshine as Marcelle looks at them from the door of her cabin. The sound of waves beating upon the shore comes through the tree-tops to her ears. The birds sing merrily, and the green of the hillside is fair—for Marcelle is happy.

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Marcelle

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